

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

**BRITISH  
NORTH BORNEO**

BY  
**L. W. W. GUDGEON**

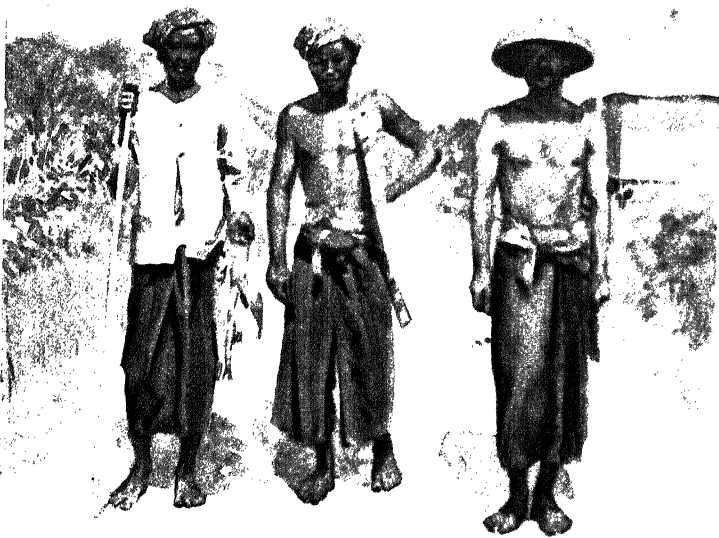
WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS  
IN COLOUR

BY  
**ALLAN STEWART**



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*M. S. F.*

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TO

AGNES HERBERT

TO PLEASE WHOM I WROTE THIS BOOK

# CONTENTS

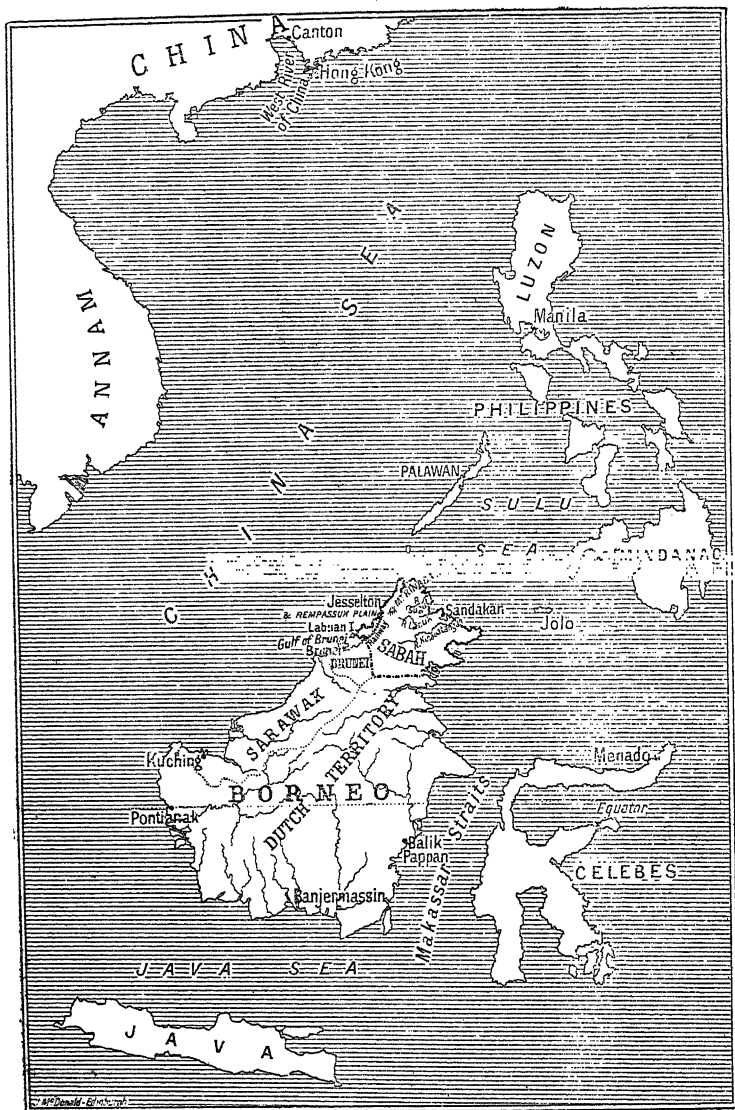
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. HISTORY . . . . .	I
II. RIVER PEOPLE, COAST PEOPLE, AND OTHER MALAY TRIBES . . . . .	7
III. COAST TRIBES— <i>continued</i> . . . . .	14
IV. HILL PEOPLE . . . . .	22
V. HILL PEOPLE— <i>continued</i> . . . . .	30
VI. THE CHINESE IN BORNEO . . . . .	39
VII. PLANTATIONS . . . . .	46
VIII. TOBACCO ESTATES . . . . .	54
IX. TOWNS. . . . .	59
X. THE "ORANG-OUTANG" . . . . .	67
XI. TIMBADO AND DEER . . . . .	74
XII. BIRDS <sup>2</sup> -NESTS AND FLYING FOXES . . . . .	83



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

BADJAUS . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
A CROCODILE-HAUNTED SWAMP . . . . .	9
NATIVES WITH THEIR BOATS . . . . .	16
DUSUM HILLMEN COMING DOWN TO THE COAST TO TRADE . . . . .	25
A NATIVE VILLAGE . . . . .	32
A CHINESE STORE . . . . .	41
DUSUNS BATHING WITH THEIR BUFFALOES . . . . .	48
A TOBACCO PLANTATION . . . . .	57
A RUBBER PLANTATION . . . . .	64
A SULU HOUSE AND COCOANUT PLANTATION . . . . .	73
A NATIVE HOUSE . . . . .	80
A DUSUN AND HIS BUFFALO STEED . . . . .	<i>On the cover</i>

*Sketch-Map on page viii*



SKETCH-MAP OF BRITISH NORTH BORNEO.

# BRITISH NORTH BORNEO

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORY

IN the days before the Manchu Emperors ruled in China, the beginning of each season of north-east monsoons saw a fleet of trading junks leave the Si Kiang, or West River, of China for the islands of the Malay Archipelago.

The monsoon is a steady wind that blows in the China Sea for some months regularly from the north-east and then it veers round and blows for some months regularly from the south-west. The early Chinese skipper in his light but unwieldy-looking junk, found that the only practical method of taking long sea-voyages was to spread his huge mat sails in front of the north-east monsoon and be driven south. Thus, striking as near a point to the harbour he was bound for as possible, he would find his way to that destination by following coast-lines, and enlisting the services of strong fixed ocean-currents, such as those produced by the discharge of large rivers.

## British North Borneo

When the time for the change of the wind came, the skipper, having done his trading and barter meanwhile, again spread his sail in front of the monsoon, the south-west one this time, and in due course, provided that he escaped the fierce Ilanun and Sulu pirates that cruised around his route, he struck the coast of China again, and reached home. Thus half a year or more was occupied in a voyage that now could be accomplished in a fortnight. But John Chinaman, provided that he makes a large profit, is even more prepared to undertake big risks than our American cousin, and the spices, ores, birds'-nests, precious stones, pearls, and other valuable things that formed the cargo of that day were highly prized and eagerly sought by the wealthy Chinese nation.

It can easily be understood, then, by anyone who looks at a school-map of Asia that junks bound for the bountiful island of Java would now and again strike by accident the coast of the huge island-continent of Borneo, which places its 290,000 square miles of land right across the route of the China-Java trader. Some of these Chinese junks captured by the pirate craft of Brunei were towed into the mouth of the Brunei River, and their crews were forced to work as slaves to the Sultan of Brunei. They introduced the art of working in bronze, for which the people of Brunei are famous to the present day, and also they

## History

instructed the wild, bloodthirsty Malay, to which race the Brunei people belong, in the art of the silversmith and the craft of the potter.

In the map of Borneo in this book, you will see that the Sultanate of Brunei is at the head of a gulf, called the Gulf of Brunei, just behind the island of Labuan on the north coast. This, the most important State in the island, gave its name to the whole island, for Bohni-yo is supposed to be only a Chinaman's attempt at pronouncing Brunei. This theory no doubt is correct, for a Chinaman cannot pronounce an R, whereas a Malay rolls his R. Thus the people of the country would call it Ber-r-runei, and this the tongue of a Chinaman would utterly fail to pronounce.

North of Brunei stretches the peninsula of Sabah, the west of which was of old nominally a possession of the Sultan of Brunei, and the east of which was nominally a possession of the Sultan of Sulu. The latter lived at Jolo, an island situated between the coast of Borneo and the Philippine Islands.

Sulu as a State has had a most turbulent history. The Sultan of Sulu was constantly being worried for three hundred years by the Spaniards, while he drew all his revenue from the sacking of Spanish ships on their way to and from Manila. In fact, at the same time as our Devon and Cornwall mariners were annoying

## British North Borneo

the west-bound galleons of Spain, the fierce crews of Sulu warriors were attacking the east-bound.

The peninsular of Sabah is now called British North Borneo, and is ruled over by an English Chartered Company. South-west of Brunei is the State of Sarawak. This, formerly a province of the Sultanate, was destined to become the kingdom of an adventurous Englishman. In the whole history of the British Empire no more thrilling episode happened than the founding of the royal house of Sarawak by James Brooke.

A young man, who had served until disabled by a wound in the India Company's forces, James Brooke, living on his pension and small income, was at the age of thirty a mere visionary. Then came the magic touch of gold; some fortune was bequeathed to him. He bought a small yacht and sailed east. His intention at first seems to have been to seize a portion of the island of Celebes. Menado, the northernmost of Celebes' many peninsulas, was a State with, at that time, a great reputation among Chinese traders. It, in fact, was spoken about as a "land flowing with milk and honey," and the people bore then, as now, a reputation of being the quietest of all the tribes in the Malay Archipelago.

But, arriving at Singapore, the plans of the future Rajah were altered. He heard about the atrocities

## History

committed on the high seas by Sulu, Ilanun, Brunei, and Sea Dyak pirates, more especially by the fierce Sea Dyaks of Sarawak, and he put down his helm, and on the wings of the monsoon he sailed into Brunei estuary.

The town of Brunei was then, as now, built of palm-poles and nipa thatch over the water. Itself, it was a humble imitation of Venice; its inhabitants were fishermen by birth and pirates by choice, and its monarch was a small brown savage, half-clothed in silk, and splashed with gold and pearls. The Istana, or palace, was one long thatched hut propped on lofty poles above the muddy stream, with numerous smaller huts attached to it by shaky gangways.

To this palace James Brooke was rowed in the yacht's gig, and he pointed out to the young Sultan that he, as an Emperor, was responsible for the conduct of his rajahs, pangirans, panglimas, datus and other subordinates. The word sultan is equivalent to the English word emperor, and rajah to the English word king. Further, James Brooke warned the Sultan that the British in Singapore were tired of the annoyance to trade caused by his subjects' acts of robbery on the sea, and that sooner or later a British gunboat would burn his town about his ears, and hang him and his cut-throats on the mangrove.

The Sultan was greatly frightened, and besought Brooke to assist him in subduing the turbulent Sea

## British North Borneo

Dyaks of Sarawak. This question was discussed at length, and finally Brooke agreed to accept the appointment offered him by the Sultan to a tributary realm in Sarawak, and he became Rajah Brooke of Sarawak.

During the next decade Brooke destroyed the pirate fleets, sinking one "prahu," as the native craft is named, after another until the scourge of the Sea Dyak had ceased. His midshipman-nephew George helped him right through, and when Rajah Sir James Brooke died, honoured by his own subjects and by the British nation as well, he bequeathed his prosperous little kingdom to this same gallant midddy, who is the present Rajah. Like his uncle he, too, has received a knighthood from the English sovereign.

The peninsula of Sabah, the Sultanate of Brunei, and the kingdom of Sarawak form only one-third of the huge island of Borneo ; the other two-thirds are in the possession of the Queen of Holland. As a matter of fact, the Dutch have only settled at points round the coast, like the well-known port of Banjermassin, or Pontianak, or the petroleum town of Balikpapan. The interior is a vast unknown land of gigantic mountains, rushing rivers, gloomy forests and swamps. The tribes that inhabit it are many, and every few square miles has its own language. One general rule, however, applies to the whole of Borneo : the inhabitants



## History

of the coasts, lowlands, and estuaries are Malay fishermen and Mohammedans ; the inhabitants of the hills and mountain valleys are agriculturists and heathen. A third race of naked aborigines exists. These wander about in families, armed with a blow-pipe, from which they puff a poisoned arrow. They are rarely heard of, and are chiefly noted for the wonderful tattoo marks with which they cover their bodies, and the superstitious dread in which they are held by the other races.

The Sultanate of Brunei, in 1906, was declared a British territory under the rule of the Governor of the Straits Settlements, but by then a large portion of its area had passed into the possession of the Brooke family, and a smaller portion had been absorbed by the North Borneo administration.

Sabah, or North Borneo, to give it the present official name, was purchased by William Cowie, an adventurous Scotch trader, from the Sultans of Sulu and Brunei, and sold by him to a Chartered Company, which still rules it.

## CHAPTER II

### RIVER PEOPLE, COAST PEOPLE, AND OTHER MALAY TRIBES

A LITTLE naked Malay boy, who tumbles down the ladder of his father's hut into the river and learns to swim before he can talk, is a grave little fellow in his

## British North Borneo

way. He generally has large, handsome, fearless eyes, and his little head is constantly shaved by his father, not with a razor as you would think, but with the edge of his kris or sword.

Alas ! how many of these brave little chaps come to an untimely end through their rashness when bathing. For all the rivers of Borneo abound with crocodiles, and a small Malay boy is an attractive bait for a crocodile.

It seems odd that their father, whom they call "bapa," and their mother, whom they call "mak," never try to persuade them to be careful. If a stranger remonstrates with the parents, and tells them that the children run undue risks, they shrug their shoulders and say, "If it is the fate of the child to die, die he will ; 'sudah.'" The word "sudah" means "finished," otherwise, "The argument is finished ; there is nothing more to say."

A small boy belonging to the Badjau tribe of Malays, and rejoicing in the name of Mohammed Saleh—generally abbreviated to Djali—was busy catching prawns in a shallow creek, through which a European wished to wade. "Are there any crocodiles there, Djali ?" asked the European. "Yes, there is one yonder," coolly replied Djali, pointing to a deep pool, above the surface of which floated two lumps, one the nose and the other the eye-sockets of a huge crocodile. When a crocodile is on the watch only the tip of



Figure 1. A person sitting on a wooden structure, possibly a bridge or walkway, surrounded by dense foliage.

## Malay Tribes

his nose, and what might be called part of his forehead, appear above the surface. "Oh, that one is not 'jahat,'" said Djali. Now, "jahat" means wicked, and the Badjaus firmly believe that there are "jahat" crocodiles that eat people, and others that do not. Further, these natives greatly object to a "Tuan," as they call a European, firing at a harmless crocodile, as they say it will make him turn "jahat."

The expression "Tuan" originally meant lord or master, but now it is the exact equivalent of sir, or gentleman. It is applied to every European without exception, and to hardly anyone else, except a few of the wealthy hadjis and some native chiefs, of whose hereditary title it forms a part.

A good-class Malay, to whatever tribe he may belong, is scrupulously polite. His ideas as to politeness forbid him to use a personal pronoun when addressing a superior. Consequently he addresses himself to his visitor like this: "Will the Tuan sit down upon the cushion of the Tuan's servant, for the Tuan's feet must be tired, and the Tuan's servant will bring the Tuan some water." Any difficulty about using the pronoun "I" or "me" is obviated by the fact that no such word exists in Malay. The words used in its place all mean "servant" or "slave."

The Badjaus, the Sulus, and the Bruneis plant very little else besides padi, or, to give it its Western name,

## British North Borneo

rice. Their system of planting this is to clear a hollow place of timber and undergrowth in the dry weather, burning everything that will burn, and when the wet weather comes they drain the surrounding land into this hollow and plant the rice upon the muddy surface thus created. This form of padi-field is called a "sawah," and in one style or another is common throughout the countries of the East. The women and the children do most of this work ; the men live three-quarters of their life in their boats, which are of many shapes, but mostly built from a tree-trunk hollowed out by fire, with bent-shaped branches nailed inside it for ribs. They have a small awning of palm-leaves to keep off the sun and rain, and a small hollowed-out piece of sandstone to hold a charcoal fire. Some of these boats sail very fast, but as they have round bottoms and no keel, and moreover, as their owners use enormous sails, their liability to capsizes is considerable.

The first in importance of their sea-going craft is the trading "prahu," which in olden times kept up a constant communication between Brunei, Labuan, Kuching, and Singapore. In these days of steam navigation these large craft are rarely met with in the North of Borneo. They are strongly-built, broad-beamed boats, with carved figure-heads and high sterns, carrying one or two large lateen sails, and fitted also with long sweeps or oars. Then comes the "pukatan," so-called because it

## Malay Tribes

is used for drawing one end of the "pukat" or mile-long sweep-net, the other end being fastened to a stake. The next boat in point of size is the "lambau," which is used with a trawl-net called a "salambau" for trawling in deep waters. A "sapit" is a boat after the European style, fitted, unlike the rest, with a keel and rudder, and shaped like those funny little Cromer crab-boats that have added to the joy of many a schoolboy's summer holiday. A "gobang" is just a small hollowed-out log with a couple of bamboo-seats in it.

The fastest sailing boat on the Borneo coast is the Sulu "dapan," or double catamaran. This is a long, narrow boat, from each side of which stretch two long arms carrying a bamboo at their extremities. Thus the "dapan" has a bamboo on each side of her about four feet away, and these balance one another and prevent the excessive amount of sail that she carries from capsizing her. In these boats, flimsy as they are, the Sulus of the American island of Balabac are bold enough to voyage to the mainland of Borneo over several hundred miles of open sea.

It is great fun to go with a party of Brunei fishermen to spear the "pari," a big fish similar to our skate. A party, consisting of twelve men in three small gobangs, set out from the "kampong," or village, just before dusk. In each boat is a three-pronged spear, the prongs of which are often made from five-inch nails,

## British North Borneo

not set in a row like a fork, but lashed to the shaft of the spear, so that their points would form the angles of a triangle. These prongs are also farther apart at their points than at their heads, and, when driven into the fish they splay out more, and, having small barbs cut in them, they give the fisherman a tight hold on the fish.

All the men have prepared torches. They drift down, with as little use of their paddles as possible, towards the mouth of the river and the open bay. Here they search for a shallow spot, one near the mangrove, with a sandy bank, three feet or less beneath the surface. Directly it is properly dark the fun commences, and great sport it is too.

The torches are held down close to the surface of the water and the big flat fishes, attracted by the light, rise to investigate its cause. A strong, muscular brown arm swings over the boat's side and "swish" goes the spear. Then the fight starts. The small boat rocks until it seems as though it must roll over altogether, in spite of the fact that two of the crew are throwing their weight on the other side to balance it whenever their prey gives one of his mighty tugs. The shaft of the spear is a flexible rattan cane with the larger end attached to the prongs, otherwise it would soon break under the strain. When the pari is landed, or rather lifted into the boat, then the time for the fishermen to be on their guard has come, for the pari is an ugly customer to handle.

## Malay Tribes

On the end of his nose he carries a long flexible spike, sometimes, in the case of old matured fishes, as much as four feet in length. To get the point of this run into a man's arm or leg means not only a bad wound, but a dangerous one, as some kind of poison seems to cling to it and infect the wound.

The pari is a nasty brute to encounter when bathing on the sandbanks or shallows of Borneo's many bays. But a more dreaded danger is a collision with a giant jelly-fish. The head of this curious creature is as large round as the top of a small table, and streamers or arms of three feet in length trail behind it. It is in these streamers that the danger lies. Where they touch they stick. To pull one off a man's arm means pulling off the skin and the flesh underneath.

Altogether the seashore bather in Borneo does not have a happy time. The golden sands of Margate or the beach at Cromer may not be so romantic, but they are safer. No need on an English beach to think of the pari, or the jelly-fish, or to worry about hammer-head sharks, sword-fish, or blood-sucking octopi. One of the latter, even if only two pounds in weight, is quite a sufficient encumbrance to drown a strong swimmer. Its tentacles, armed with their many leechlike mouths, hang on to its prey even when its body has been hacked to pieces.



# British North Borneo

## CHAPTER III

### COAST TRIBES—*continued*

As before stated, the coast tribes of Borneo are all of the Malay race and of the Mohammedan religion. They will not touch a pig or eat its flesh; and all other animals, unless they receive the "hallal," or cut across the throat, as prescribed by the Koran, are also barred as articles of food. A Badjau or Sulu tracker, when out shooting with a European, directly a stag is shot will rush forward and cut its throat from ear to ear before the animal has breathed his last, otherwise he could not bring the meat home for his family and friends to eat.

The little boys are allowed every liberty in the "kampong." They go where they please, wear no clothes, have no lessons to learn, and no rules to obey. When they are very young, however, they delight to go with their fathers on fishing expeditions, and, armed with a small paddle, they assist in the labour of paddling the gobang out to sea. When the boys reach the age of twelve years they are generally given a pair of blue cotton trousers, and a red or yellow piece of cloth to tie round their heads; or else they wear instead of the latter, if wealthy enough, a red fez cap or a cane woven Dusun hat bought from the hill people. When

## Coast Tribes

walking about they carry a cane-shafted spear with a broad blade, and a long sheaf-knife, called a "parang."

The girls do not have such an easy time, although they are never ill-treated. They have to do the slight amount of cooking that a diet of boiled rice and sun-dried fish entails, and they have to plant the sawah rice-field and weave the "tikars."

The latter are a kind of mat. They are woven with the fingers from the dyed fibres of a species of cactus. It looks like broad straw, but is, as a matter of fact, far superior. The patterns they select are varied, but no originality in design is permitted. They are to-day weaving the selfsame patterns that their ancestors wove a hundred years ago.

The childhood of these little girls does not last very long. At twelve or thirteen years of age they are married, often to a man of thirty or more, who may have another wife already. Their parents do not consider any other question of importance when they can discover a would-be husband who can answer : "Yes, I have the three buffaloes and the ten sacks of rice which you require as this girl's 'brian,'" to the one vital question of wealth.

The "brian" is the price fixed on every marriageable girl, which must be paid by her would-be husband before marriage. The girls, of course, are only married to Mohammedans. No Malay girl, whether a Badjau

## British North Borneo

or a Sulu, a Brunei or a Bujis, an Ilanun or a Banjeri, would be forced to wed a heathen and a pig-eater. The coast tribes look with the greatest contempt upon their heathen neighbours, and before the advent of the white man they ruled the whole country and spent much of their time plundering the hill tribes.

The costume of women varies with the tribe. Some tribes wear the cotton Malay "sarong," a kind of skirt woven in pretty flowery patterns, above which they wear a white cotton jacket, called a "kabaya." But the Sulus and Badjaus dress their women in loose cotton or silk breeches of green, yellow, or blue colour, and rarely use "sarongs."

A wedding is a long performance. The actual religious ceremony does not take so long. The Imam, or priest, mumbles a few words out of the Koran, or if there is no official Imam, a Hadji—a man who has been to Mecca on a pilgrimage—does this, and then the feast commences.

A wedding-feast is never complete without its "gammelong," or orchestra of gongs. These are bronze gongs of great age, none of modern workmanship existing. They are generally the property of a comparatively rich man, and are borrowed far and wide. The actual food supplied is merely rice and deer-meat, or, perhaps, a young buffalo is killed if the bridegroom be particularly rich. Often cucumbers and

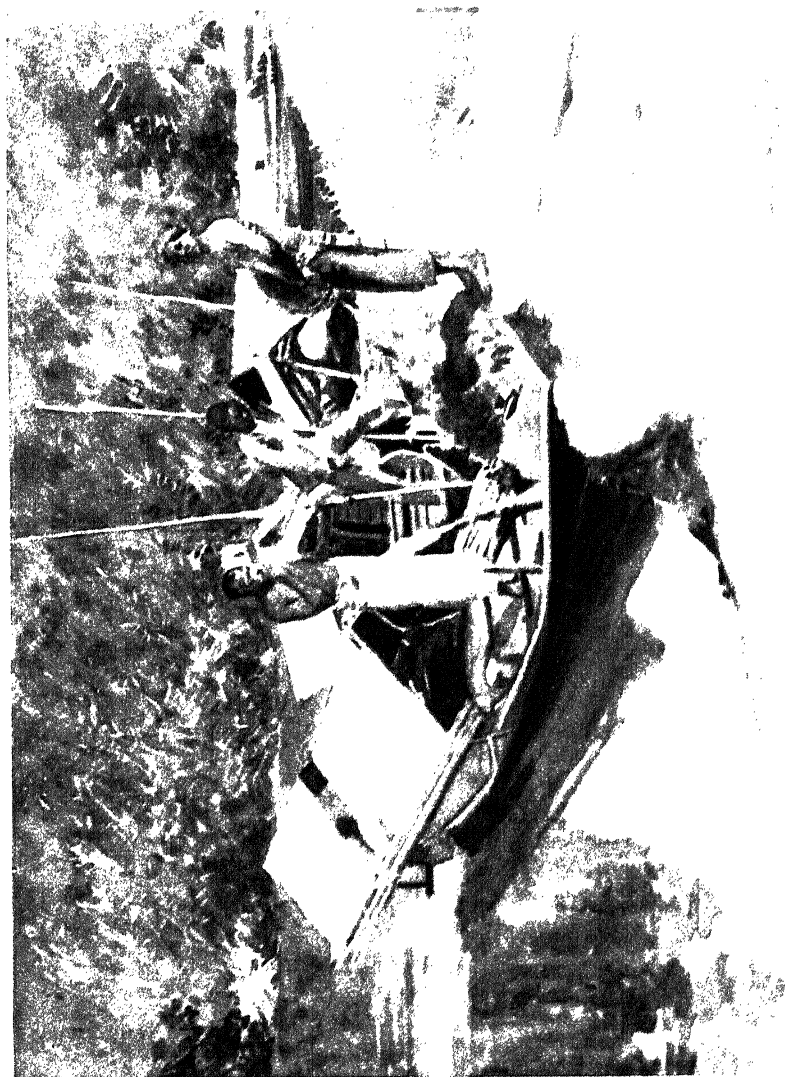


Fig. 1. The boat on the river.

## Coast Tribes

other vegetables are served together with bananas, but a Malay at a wedding-feast looks upon these in the same way in which an English boy at a birthday-party looks at bread-and-butter. It is jam and cake that the schoolboy wants, and venison or buffalo beef that the Malay wants. The bread-and-butter, and, in Borneo, the cucumbers and bananas, can stand over for another day.

Silver "anting-anting," or ear-rings, and silver hair-pins are often the prized possession of the Borneo maiden, but only in the family of a Panglima or Datu will the womenfolk be found to wear much gold.

The Malay tribesman of Borneo is polite to everyone, but beyond that he does not go. He walks with a proud and independent bearing, and he carries always the eagle eye and the alert expression of his pirate forefathers. He will not work as a coolie nor engage in any menial task. He is still feared by the hill tribes, and respected by the Chinamen trading in his country. Indeed, it is best for them to respect him, as he will brook no insult from them. Should a "pig of a Chinaman," as the Malay generally calls him, when trading in the country, lose his temper and insult an Ilanun or a Sulu, the latter will hew him down on the spot, and, vanishing into the jungle, will be lost. He probably goes to some distant "kampong," following

## British North Borneo

the road made by the deer or the rhinoceros, and avoiding main paths. However, the hands of justice do not often fall upon him until long after the crime is committed.

In England the word "amok" is frequently used, but few people know the origin of it. Borneo is the country of the amok. An amok is a man that goes suddenly insane with rage, and, thirsting for blood, rushes out with a "kris," or sword, to kill and be killed. In the madness of the moment an amok will strike down his own wife and children. A deeply insulted Malay will often work himself up into a frenzy and run amok. Directly the cry "Amok! amok!" is raised in a village, everyone runs for the boats. They all tumble in and paddle out to mid-stream. Meanwhile one or two brave men rush on in the wake of the madman, and sooner or later he is cut down, not, however, before many innocent people have been murdered by him.

Just picture a street scene in a small coast port. A palm-pole jetty running up from the sea, and a beach fringed with native boats and small Chinese junks are faced by a row of Chinese shops, whose owners trade cotton goods, and lamps, oil, and matches, in exchange for dried fish and deer-hides. Farther along, built right out over the salt water, are a few native huts. It is a pretty scene, the background of cocoa-nut palms

## Coast Tribes

and slender areca palms waving in the breeze sends a deep green reflection on to the inshore water, while out seawards the setting sun tinges everything brilliant in purples, reds, and golds. Ah, never are there such gorgeous sunsets as in Borneo! The strip of beach littered with broken white and pink coral in itself is a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever." At one end of the street will be the police quarters and court-house, with a corporal and Chinese licensing clerk in charge.

Suppose that it is a fair day, that the hillmen have come down from their village, bringing tree-gums, fruits, tapioca, rattan-canes, and other tradeable commodities, while the Malays have offered dried fish, edible seaweed, and nipa-leaf palm-thatch. The Dusuns come down from the hills, sometimes three days' journey away, riding on their buffaloes, each loaded up with trade goods. The women do not get a buffalo, and have to trudge by the side of their lord and master through jungle and swamp and across open sun-scorched "ladangs," which are old, disused rice-fields, carrying a heavy load as well.

Brass and silver armlets flash in the sun, cottons of many colours are worn, with here and there a dash of silky sheen from some Bugi's silk "sarong." The hillmen are by now half drunk with Chinese spirit, called "samsu," and probably also with cheap Dutch gin.

## British North Borneo

A drunken hillman turns round suddenly, and is, in consequence, run into by a hastening Malay. "Babi-lu !" the hillman shrieks. "You pig !"

A Mohammedan, and, perhaps, the son of a Datu or chief, to be called a pig by a low-caste, infidel hillman ! The Malay stops ; he turns slightly pale under his olive skin. Suddenly he draws his "kris" with a flash, and the Dusun lies dead at his feet.

A big Sikh policeman steps out of a store. The Malay sees visions of prison, hateful menial labour, and years of misery. No ; he will die, and, like all his race, he prefers to die fighting.

The policeman is on his guard, he wards off a blow with the butt of his rifle. The Malay rushes on. The Chinese at the cry of "Amok !" dash into their shops, and hastily push to the door and bolt it with a wooden beam. One poor, fat Chinese "krani," or clerk, loses his wits and runs in front of the madman, who now, with eyes bloodshot and gleaming and hair flying behind him, for his head-cloth has fallen off, cuts in the air to right and to left. One blow, and the Chinaman's head rolls into the wayside ditch.

The amok rushes on to murder many more before the crack, crack, crack of rifles tells its own tale. He is shot by the Dyak or Sikh police as a mad dog would be shot down at home.

Whilst talking about the Malays in Borneo, it is



## Coast Tribes

worth while telling how they catch the "jahat," or man-eating crocodiles.

A goat is killed, and his stomach is taken and used as bait. Inside it is concealed a bamboo stick, sharpened at both ends and bent up in the form of a bow, with a string made of soluble sinews. To the middle of this bow is attached a twist, composed of many fine threads. These latter separate out, and after a few yards are one by one hitched in a row to a small piece of bamboo, and then brought together again and twisted into one cord, which is tied to a rope. At the other end of this rope is a buoy or float. Thus, when the crocodile has swallowed the bait, the bow opens out in its stomach and the points pierce him. He tries to bite. He has no solid cord to bite through, but many, many fine threads, some of which may be cut by his needle-like teeth, but a lot are sure to catch in between the teeth and hold. He soon feels very ill, and climbs up on the bank to rest himself from the straining of the buoy, for it pulls owing to the current of the stream beating against it. Here the searchers from the Malay "kampong" in the course of a few days find him, and kill him with their spears.

At each thrust they remind the greedy reptile of a brother, an aunt, or a nephew, that he has eaten. Little Barut, or little Dullah, with his tiny spear is there, and will stab and stab away, his shrill child's voice telling

## British North Borneo

the fallen monster of his former misdeeds in words of bitter intensity, for that small child has certainly lost a baby brother or sister whilst bathing in the stream.

### CHAPTER IV

#### HILL PEOPLE

THE people that live in the hills and upland valleys of Borneo, to whatever tribe they may belong, are in the main governed by the same customs and habits, and live under the same conditions. The difference between a hill Dyak and a Dusun, for instance, is only one of language and warlikeness. The Dyak is a head-hunter—that is to say, a young man of the tribe is not accounted a warrior until he can produce one or more human heads. This does not mean that he kills his victims in open battle. No ; how he kills them and whom he kills is a matter of little importance as long as he gets the heads.

The Dusun, although similar in appearance, in his superstitious folklore, and in his daily life, is a peace-loving fellow. He cares not to kill, and he is timid and nervous when in contact with people of other tribes and races. It was undoubtedly fear that in the early centuries drove his forefathers to the hills, the

## Hill People

mountains, and the secluded valleys. They feared the Badjau and the Sulu, as well they might. All the history of these unfortunate people is one long tale of suffering at the hands of a stronger race, and meagre as the history is, owing to a lack of any written Dusun language, it is sufficient to prove that the Malay tribes coveted and took by force whenever possible the "kerbaus," the rice, the sweet potatoes, the pots, the gongs, and even the coarse fibre kilts and jackets, of their weaker neighbours in the hills.

The advent of European rule has to some extent stopped this, and now the Dusun lives as his heart desires—in peace, under his own palm-tree.

A Dusun village consists of one long house as a rule. Sometimes, if it is a very big village, it will consist of two or even three long houses, but each house will contain from ten to fifteen families.

Dusun houses are much better built than Badjau houses. They are always built in a clearing on a hillside near a tumbling stream or waterfall. The background of gigantic forest trees, with distant mountain-peaks visible here and there where the trees are not growing too close to one another to hide them, is lovely, and in the higher ranges compares well with any scenery in the world.

The houses are built some distance off the ground, supported by posts of hard wood. The walls are made

## British North Borneo

of tree bark or bamboo planks. The roof is thatch, either palm-leaf thatch or thatch made from the long plumelike leaves of the rattan-cane. Down one side of the house from one end to the other runs an open veranda; a raised-up bench about a foot off the floor and about four feet wide occupies the outward side of this veranda, and opposite the bench are ten or more doors with ten or more little rooms behind them. Each room belongs to a family, and one big room at the end of the row is the room of the "kampong-kapala" or village headman.

At one end of the four-foot-wide bench is a small screened-off corner used for keeping the village charms and articles connected with the Dusun superstitions. The head of an extra large jungle pig, the horns of a stag, or even the head of a bear are often hung over the door of the house as evidence of the prowess of some favourite dog.

The Dusuns keep many dogs, and are very fond of them. Indeed, they make pets of all their domestic animals, even the pigs and fowls.

A Dusun dog is a very small brown or brown-and-white dog. He has sharp ears and a very pointed nose, and is a plucky little fellow at pulling down the big sambar deer, the wild boar, or even the bear. He has the full run of the house, and if a particularly petted dog, he often has a small trough cut for him by



USUN HILLMEN COMING DOWN TO  
THE CORSEY CRUISE PAGE 14

## Hill People

his master, in which, at the family meal-time, his small portion of boiled rice is placed.

The space between the floor and the ground is used by Dusuns as a pen in which to shut up the pigs, goats, and fowls, at night. The fowls unless well guarded would soon be all taken by the jungle cat or by snakes.

Of course the distance between the ground and the floor of the house is such as to necessitate the use of a ladder. A Dusun with his naked toes finds a notched pole quite sufficient for him. Should a European pay a visit, however, he will find it difficult in his shoes to get a foothold on this sloping pole, and unless assisted from above will surely slip and fall.

The Dusun children are not pretty. They generally suffer a great deal from eating too much rice in the month following the padi harvest, and too little rice during the other eleven months of the year. This causes their stomachs to protrude, and spoils them for ever from an artist's point of view. They would not make cherubims or even little Cupids, but with a small tight-fitting green jacket they could easily be turned into woodland-gnomes.

A Dusun boy is a quaint little elf; his sole garment is a "chawat" or loin-cloth; his head is generally shaven except for a small patch just above the nape of the neck, where a kind of ragged tassel sprouts out, making a convenient handle to hold the youngster by

## British North Borneo

when his father has to give him a hammering for being naughty.

Funnily enough, when the Dusun boy grows big the whole system is reversed. Then the nape of the neck and the back of the head only are shaved, and a fringe is left all round the forehead.

A Dusun girl has to work hard very early in life, and so it is impossible to find a pretty-looking maid over the age of nine. Even at this age they often toil down from the hills with a large knapsack of bark, filled with tree-gum or maize heads, and walk for miles to some market near the coast, returning later with a load of salt fish or seaweed.

The padi-fields of the Dusuns are always some distance off from the houses. They are not "sawahs," or water-fields. The padi is planted on dry hill soil in irregular-shaped fields hewn and burnt out of the virgin forest. They are strewn with logs too large to burn, and with boulders and outcropping rocks, while here and there a shanty, perched high upon poles, gives shelter to watchers, who at night burn torches and beat gongs in order to keep the pigs, deer, and bison, out of the crop.

The men assist in cutting the jungle, but the entire work of planting the crop and harvesting it is done by the women, and as the land is hill land with often a severe slope, these latter do not have an easy life.

## Hill People

The reason that the padi is planted far from the house is that then there is less chance for the domestic pigs, fowls, and "kerbaus," to run riot in the crop. The "kerbau" is a greedy kind of buffalo, and should he once get into a crop of young padi he will feast on the green ears until he can hardly move.

It is quite a common sight outside a Dusun house to see a small child squatting on the grass chewing one end of a long sugar-cane, while at the other end, escaping the observation of the child, a small pig will be sucking at the juices of the same cane. So tame are these animals that when the child discovers the thief, and, using the sugar-cane instead of a stick, catches the pig a sounding blow with it, the animal only moves a yard away, remonstrating with many a squeak at such treatment from an old chum.

Very often a Dusun will be seen, when changing his quarters, travelling with a half-grown pig slung round his neck. The animal keeps quite still and does not seem to suffer much through his "topsy-turvy" position.

The bamboo is utilized in hundreds of different ways by the Dusun. It grows in many different sizes. Small bamboos of an inch or two in diameter are used for making fowl-houses, and also are often tied across the roof of a dwelling to stop the wind from raising the thatch. A large bamboo which grows up to a



## British North Borneo

foot in diameter at the base and forty feet in length, is made into planks. The way to make a bamboo plank is to split the bamboo down one side, knock out the pithy joints and flatten it out, then put heavy weights on it, and when it is dry it will not any more curl up into its old cylindrical shape. This species of bamboo is also made into water-pots. A joint, or section, is taken, a small hole is cut in one side near the end, and the water-pot is complete.

The word "Dusun" means orchard. These people were called "Orang Dusun," or men of the orchards, because their houses are surrounded by fruit-trees. These include the durian, a celebrated fruit, much talked about by travellers ; it is a large green ball, the size and shape of a Rugby football, with prickles two inches long all over it. When it is opened, the first thing discovered is an overpowering odour like nothing else on earth. A small English boy, the son of a Borneo missionary, once compared it to the smell of yeast. Although this gives some idea of the smell, it is only a little like yeast in reality. According to the same authority, its taste was like a mixture of custard, onions, and bad eggs. This last, however, is a libel on a fine fruit. The flavour must be delicious, because after the first trial everyone likes it, and many old planters and Government officials, resident for a long time in Borneo, crave for this fruit with a craving

## Hill People

that will take no denial. Far and wide they send to buy it.

Bananas, papayas, limes, pommeloos, and mangoes, grow in profusion in the valleys inhabited by the Dusuns, whilst on the top of the higher hills wild raspberries can be found. The "rhambutan" is a small red fruit with a thick peel covered with green hairs, that somewhat resembles the chestnut, while the "langsats" is a fruit the size of a large gooseberry, covered with a peel resembling suède leather. Both of these have a delicious jelly-like pulp and bitter pips. The gigantic "tarap," with its hundreds of cream-covered seeds, is an attractive bait for the larger apes. The orang-outang makes nightly raids on this tree, and the Dusun sets a trap to catch him. This latter, however, is rather a forlorn hope; no one ever seems to have heard of the ape being caught by it.

A small green and red parroquet hung in a circular rattan cage is a favourite pet of the Dusuns. It can only screech, and, beyond its brilliant coloured feathers, has no apparent claim to interest. The Bayo bird is quite different. In appearance like a jackdaw, but much larger, it displays a wonderful amount of intelligence. It soon learns to talk, and is much sought after by people in the coast-stations of Borneo, who buy it from the Dusuns at a high price.

# British North Borneo

## CHAPTER V

### HILL PEOPLE—*continued*

IT is a morning of great excitement for the small Dusun boys and girls when the elders decide to have a day's "toba" fishing.

The "toba" is a long root planted by the Dusuns on patches of old padi-fields for the sole purpose of catching fish. Some of this root, having been dug up the night before, is carried in the bark knapsacks mentioned in the last chapter by the girls of the "kampong" to the spot selected by the headman for the fishing. This spot will certainly be a fairly wide pool with a narrow outlet and not too much current.

Over this pool they build a platform of bamboos and sticks with a floor of tree bark. Here they beat and bruise the "toba," pouring water on it. Its milk, like juice, falls into the stream below, and turns the transparent water into a thin gruel.

This juice thus gets drawn in small quantities into the breathing organs of the fish. It makes the smaller ones absolutely unconscious, so that they float like dead fish on the surface of the water. Even the biggest fish, and there are some as large as our trout, are rendered stupid and slow, so that they can easily be scooped up in baskets and small nets.

## Hill People

Now the fun starts: men, women, boys, and girls, even the dogs and puppies, all jump into the water and grab and snatch at the hundreds of fish thus placed within their power. Sometimes a small dog running away with a big fish is pelted with stones by five or six urchins to make him drop it. One stone catching him fairly on the nose he drops the fish with a howl, but before the nearest boy can grab it a smaller puppy with a lot of impudence will seize it and stagger off amidst the good-natured cheers of the Dusuns. Such a thing highly amuses them, and the pup is allowed to keep the fish.

Tired out with their exertions, the Dusuns in half an hour or so emerge on the bank dripping wet but happy. A few of the fish recover and escape downstream, but the bulk repose within the tree-bark knapsacks, to be presently consumed at a great triumphant feast in the evening.

Dusuns are very fond of a fish diet; they use a small hand net, called a "rhambat," about three feet square, with the edges weighted with iron. This can be wielded by one man, and affords good sport. With a clever trick of the hand, the Dusun throws it so that it alights level with the surface of the water, then the weights sinking rapidly draw together, and the fish are enclosed in the slack of the net.

The boys have a simple but effective method of

## British North Borneo

catching small fish ; they find a spot in a stream where three small boulders form a pool. Into this pool they bang a large stone, and the concussion on the surface of the water kills or stuns ten or a dozen tiny fish. When fish are unobtainable, the small boys catch frogs, lizards, tortoises, and snakes, all of which go into the family pot, and nobody seems the worse for it.

Everyone in a Dusun village, except the babies, have brown or black teeth, and red lips ; this ugly disfigurement is caused by chewing the "pinang," or areca nut ; the tall graceful palm that yields this nut beautifies every jungle clearing.

Before it is ready for chewing the "pinang" has to be wrapped in a leaf of a creeper called "siri" and sprinkled with quicklime. This quicklime is made by burning over a few sticks the shells of large tree-snails, river oysters, and such sort of things.

Every adult Dusun man has his "siri" box. It is a brass box about six inches long, two inches deep, and two inches wide. Inside are two small square receptacles, one for the lime and one for the "pinang" nut. Into the rest of the space is crammed as much "siri" leaf as it will hold.

Politeness demands that every stranger visiting a Dusun house shall at once be offered a little "pinang" and "siri." Later he will be offered a cigarette made of Dusun tobacco rolled up in a piece of scraped palm-

## Hill People

leaf. And if he is in luck he may be offered a drink of "tapei," or cocoa-nut spirit, made from the flower of the cocoa-nut palm by tapping its juice as it grows on the palm.

The Dusun unfortunately gets drunk upon every possible occasion. A fair, a wedding, a funeral, the completion of the harvest—these are all sufficient excuse for him to get drunk, and as he always carries a spear, and a "parang," or sheath-knife, with him, he is not a nice man to meet when intoxicated.

A village that has just reaped a heavy harvest will call all the neighbouring villages to a feast. The headman and two or three of the others will provide a feast, four or five pigs will be killed, a goat or two, and a score of fowls. Huge quantities of sweet potatoes will be cooked, and, needless to say, very much rice will be boiled.

The Dusuns plant a small quantity of coarse tobacco. A month before a feast, a couple or three pounds of green leaf will have been picked by the old women, and rammed down tightly into bamboo tubes to ferment. These tubes are now split open, and with a knife made out of the peel of a large bamboo—and a sharp though flimsy knife it is—the grandmothers of the village cut up the plug into a stringy tobacco.

During the feast men, women, girls, boys, and babies, smoke, chew their quids of "pinang" and

## British North Borneo

"siri," and drink the native spirit "tapei" in all the intervals between eating. The quantities of meat that they eat at these times are enormous, but then on other days they get no meat at all, so that with them it is a question of making up for lost time.

One kind of "tapei" is made from rice and another kind from maize. These are both produced in larger quantities than the cocoa-nut "tapei," and are not considered so high-class a drink.

A wealthy village at such a feast supplies five or six square, black bottles of Schiedam gin. This spirit, always of the cheapest brands, is ruining the Dusuns that live too near to trading-centres; compared with it their own "tapei" is a fairly innocent beverage.

The Dusun music is identically the same as that of the Badjaus and Sulus and all the coast tribes, for in music the hill people and their coast neighbours have the same taste. The Dusun orchestra of gongs when once it starts goes on steadily for two or three days, one relay of beaters relieving another until the repetition of the same scale of six notes ought to drive the whole audience mad. It does not, however; it only cheers them.

It is very interesting when far up-country, away from European influence, to see the Dusuns dyeing their bark cloth with a species of woad, yielding identically the same blue as our early British fore-

## Hill People

fathers are said to have used for staining their own bodies before they adopted the custom of wearing clothes. Right far up-country the Dusuns have a dialect which their own people from parts nearer the coast cannot understand, and here one will meet with implements, weapons, and musical instruments, not met with elsewhere. For instance, there is a reed whistle blown with the nose, which, when played, produces very little sound with a lot of effort ; also a kind of banjo with one string, a dismal failure to all appearances, but still, highly prized by its owners.

Most of the more brilliant-patterned Dusun hats come from up-country. They are woven from the peel of the rattan-cane, and dyed in black, red, and yellow colours. In shape they are merely like an inverted saucer with a bump in the centre at the top. However, they wear well and keep off the rain and sun very effectively. So good are they that the coast tribes are always eager to obtain them, although they pretend to hold Dusun ideas and Dusun habits in great disdain.

The Dusuns have in each village several large green or yellow ornamental jars called "tajus." Formerly, before Chinese traders introduced Canton earthenware, the Dusun turned out the jars on their own humble potter's wheel. Now the art of pottery is practically extinct, but there remain these few relics of



## British North Borneo

the past, which the poor Dusuns value above all other possessions.

The custom formerly was to bury the body of an important man, such as a village chief or a capable hunter of pigs and deer, or a wealthy owner of many "kerbaus," in a "taju." When the old cherished form of "taju" grew scarce, old graves were dug up and the jars used over again. Later, Chinese-made jars were used, and after a time even these were dug up, and if unbroken, used a second time; and now it is a regular custom in many villages to allow the dead only a few years unmolested, after which their bones are removed to make room for others.

This custom of burying the dead in earthen pots is only common to certain localities, but it is probably the cause of the periodical reoccurrence of that dreadful infection—smallpox, which once or twice in a decade sweeps off thousands of the hill men of Borneo, preventing the population from ever becoming anything else than sparse. The infection, buried beneath the ground, a few years later is dug up again, and spreads with malignant rapidity over hill and valley, drawing across this lovely island the black trail of death.

The roads that connect village and village are mere tracks winding in and out between the buttressed trunks of the gigantic forest trees, descending steep

## Hill People

slopes, running first on one side, then on the other of rushing hill-streams, and often a foot deep in slippery mud. For foot passengers they would be most wearisome, but perched high up on his unwieldy-looking buffalo the Dusun finds naught to trouble him. The buffalo uses his feet with the agility of a goat and the brains of a high-bred charger. His speed seems not great, but no European could keep up with him for four hours on his native slopes. In places where it looks impossible that there can be a negotiable descent, the clever animal will slide down almost on his haunches, bearing safely to the valley below his owner and a hundredweight of "padi" or resin.

Fords across turbulent hill-streams are nothing to frighten a "kerbau"; he is a true species of water-buffalo, and as amphibious as a hippopotamus. They would be safe even for an Absalom to ride, for they note overhanging branches, and stoop their pillar-like legs as they pass under, so that their rider shall not be knocked off. They are to the Dusun what a camel is to the Bedouin, but they have five times the intelligence of a camel.

On a certain rubber estate in Borneo, two Dusun coolies with two "kerbaus" were working at dragging shed-posts out of the jungle spot where they were felled on to the main planting road. An English doctor, whose bungalow overlooked the road, watched

## British North Borneo

them for a long time, and noticed that the "kerbaus" on being unharnessed from a log, immediately turned of their own accord, and plunged back along the jungle track to fetch another log. One afternoon he was much surprised to see the "kerbaus" refuse to return to the jungle. He asked the Dusuns why; the explanation astonished him. Every day previously, one man and one "kerbau" had had the task of pulling out five logs for a day's work. That day, as the logs were smaller, the manager had ordered them to pull out six. But here the buffaloes struck! No; five they were used to, and five was the day's task; they wanted to go and have their daily mud-bath in the roadside ditch; no more work for them! After a lot of very angry scolding and much tugging at the nose-rings, the Dusun coolies managed to force their unwilling fellow-toilers back for another pull.

Besides the Dusuns, other hill tribes that utilize the valuable services of the buffalo are the Muruts, the Ibans, and the Dyaks. Even the sea-coast Malays will not refuse a lift on the broad back of our friend, and all the planters in Borneo use him to pull their estate carts to and fro between the plantation and the landing-place where the steam-launch calls with its regular cargo of rice and other necessities.

The muscular buffalo, the fourth largest of God's creatures on land, stands pre-eminent as the symbol of

# The Chinese in Borneo

the island-continent of Borneo, and his iron sinews will be one of the factors that in the distant future will push her on to a higher position in the ranks of continents.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHINESE IN BORNEO

PRACTICALLY every store in Borneo, whatever goods it retails, is in the possession of and run by Chinamen. The whole of the import trade and all the export trade, except such things as timber, tobacco, and rubber, is in their hands.

Years ago a Chinaman was an object of contempt and ridicule to every Malay in Borneo. The Dyak only valued him as an easy prey to his insatiable desire for human heads. It was then a recognized sport of the youths among the Dyaks of Sarawak to play at hunting Chinamen.

Two youths would put all their possessions together as a stake in the hands of a third party. Then they would wait on each side of a tree-shaded path for the next poor Chinaman to come. Some unhappy settler, with a couple of pails of water hanging from his shoulders, would come pattering by on his way to water his young pepper plants. The youths would fall on him from behind ; with one blow of one of their cruel

## British North Borneo

crises, off would come his head. Then eagerly searching the body, they would see whether he had any copper cents upon him or not. To carry copper coin was then not general. If he had, one man won the stake and the head, if not, the other was the winner.

This wanton slaughter of Chinamen naturally retarded the immigration of these hard-working people into Borneo. But now, under European rule, such things cannot happen, and the Chinese are flocking into Borneo in thousands. By their industry and dogged determination they have won for themselves a prominent place in the communities of the coast ports, and having accumulated wealth, with it they have won a power which can force the respect even of the haughty Sulu or fierce Ilanun.

Far away up-country a Chinaman will travel to bring his wares into districts where through lack of competition he can demand monopoly prices. His small store, or "kadeh," as the Borneo native calls it, will be found selling every imaginable thing from brass-wire to jam, even at the foot of Mount Kinabalu, Borneo's highest known peak. On the Tempassuk plains he visits every fair, exchanging cottons for rattan-cane, which latter he sells to the chair-factories of Singapore and Hong Kong at a nice little profit of 300 per cent.

This was the first race of men from the outside



A CHINESE STORE. Page 39.

## The Chinese in Borneo

world to visit Borneo, and the Dusuns, according to their folklore, believe the nationality of their first forefathers to have been Chinese. However, of course, folklore, as usual, is incorrect, an aboriginal tribe cannot be descended from the sons of an old civilized race. The proof that the connection of the Chinese with Borneo is one of long standing lies in the fact that the name of the highest peak means Chinese Widow. "Kina" is the hillman's word for China, and "balu" in Malay is widow. This mixture of two languages in the formation of the name of a hill or place is common enough in Borneo.

The great curses of the Chinese communities in Borneo are the secret societies. Most of these, in the first place, are intended as benevolent societies, but in the tropics all the benevolence that may originally exist in them evaporates, and they become societies of murderers bent on blackmail and theft. Men of weak will, joining a society supposed to be engaged in forwarding funds to rebels in China for the overthrow of the monarchy, will soon be paying half their earnings into the Society's coffers. Those funds never reach China; they go to support in idleness and luxury the heads of the society in Borneo.

A secret society in Sarawak once made an attempt to overthrow the Government, and they have in another part of Borneo schemed to seize the Government

## British North Borneo

Treasury. Punishment of the leaders is impossible, no one knows the names of the leaders. The same fat old "Tauki," as they call their merchant, who is shrugging his shoulders and expressing his abhorrence of all such deeds and acts, may be the headman of the secret society that planned the last big gang robbery.

The pig-tail, formerly the most prominent feature seen by the eyes of an Englishman in a Chinaman's appearance, has vanished never to reappear. With it has vanished some of the good manners and behaviour of the race as well.

The nice clean shaven heads and their black adorning pig-tails were a picturesque feature of great attractiveness in the staff of domestic servants of a European bungalow. Now the "boys" grow a crop of rusty-black bristles on the top of their heads, and consider that in this item of personal beauty they have equalled their masters.

Every domestic servant that fetches and carries within the house is in Borneo called a "boy." Most of these "boys" are Macao Chinese, and in spite of the leaven of socialistic ideas that is permeating them, they still are very efficient servants, but for how much longer they will remain so, who can tell?

Wages are very high. A good boy gets £20 a year, and besides that he manages to extract a commission on all goods that he buys for his master's consumption



## The Chinese in Borneo

from local Chinese shopkeepers and market-gardeners. Although he is generally only too willing to swindle his employer out of a few cents here and a few cents there, he has his own standard of private ethics that forbids him to allow any other person to swindle. If a Javanese fruit-seller should wish to sell bananas at two for a cent instead of four, the shocked surprise, disgust, and indignation with which Mr. "Boy" will greet this attempt is very emphatically pronounced.

The two great advantages that accrue to an employer who prefers Chinese to Malay domestic servants are, firstly, that he is not worried for the everlasting loan or advance on next month's wages, and, secondly, that he has small cause to complain of laziness.

Many of the lower-class Chinamen marry Dusun wives ; Dyak wives and Murut wives are also to be found in the households of up-country traders. But the custom generally prevailing is that directly a Chinaman finds that unexpected riches and a certain social position become his, then he at once searches for a Chinese wife ; often sending to his own village in far away Swatow or on the banks of the Si Kiang for a girl of his own race. His native wife then generally goes away, sometimes to re-marry to one of her own tribe, generally to live as a person of wealth on the money she was given as a parting gift. However, the sons by the native wife are not done out of their

## British North Borneo

birthright. The daughters may or may not follow the mother back to the hills ; if they are of a marriageable age the husband will certainly keep them in order to get the "brian," or legal payment, from the men who desire to marry them.

There are instances where the native wife remains at the head of the household, and the second wife, following Chinese custom, has to become her obedient servant ; but a native woman who retains this position must be a woman of great acumen, force of character, and adaptability. Dusun women, as a rule, are not notable for any of these qualities, being the children of a race that for centuries has turned its women into field-slaves and beasts of burden.

A Chinaman is good to his women, kind to his children, and fond of his home. It is often a frightfully dirty home, but happiness thrives in spite of the dirt, and the little brown half-breed babies that tumble over one another in front of the palm-thatch hut of an up-country Chinaman are as happy in their jungle home as any babe in England.

All the subordinate positions in Government offices are held by Chinamen, many of whom are the sons of Dusun mothers, and have received their education in the mission-schools of the coast ports. In Borneo it is a Chinaman who sells you a stamp, issues you a license, examines your baggage for customs dues, and writes

## The Chinese in Borneo

down your name on a charge sheet if ever you should have the misfortune to be under arrest.

The Chinaman competes with the Malay in the fishing industry, but here he is handicapped. The amphibious Badjau or Sulu can put to sea in a ten feet long boat with perfect safety and fill her with fish, return and leave the splitting and drying of the fish to his wife and daughters. But the Chinaman requires a large "tongkang" and his own cumbersome trawling-nets, and a crew of eight or nine to work them; then on the beach he has to employ others to dry the fish and prepare it for market. Moreover, he is searching for a paying remuneration, while the happy-go-lucky Malay only needs a bare living, and an easy life near the sea that he loves. Many Chinese fishing combines have come to grief financially; the idle Malay is beating the hard-working Celestial in the one industry for which the former is best suited.

Then the Malays know how to select sandbanks for setting up "kilongs," or traps, made from bamboo stakes tied together with a rot-proof root-fibre obtained from the Dusuns. These they watch from their houses over the water, and when the tide ebbs low they go forth to glean the fish that the sea has left behind. This is an effortless way of catching fish that appeals to the Malay.

There are, therefore, a large number of Chinamen

## British North Borneo

who prefer to purchase live fish from the Badjau fishermen and salt and dry it themselves. They often give cotton cloth and other goods in exchange, making a double profit.

In British North Borneo the Chinamen have for many years past rented the right of collecting the opium, spirit, and gambling licenses, from the Government. This proceeding is called "farming" the inland revenues, and the men that rent this right are called "farmers." Thus the Chinese merchant that has the right of collecting licenses from the public opium-smoking resorts is called the "Opium Farmer," and this title clings to him as an honourable and dignified name. It is a very high ambition for a shopkeeper to aim at, finally to become the "Opium Farmer."

Yes, the Chinaman is a useful man in Borneo; without him no planting, no mining, and no railway construction could go on—everything would be at a standstill.

## CHAPTER VII

### PLANTATIONS

AN Englishman as he smokes a cigar little thinks that the component layers of that cigar are brought together from the uttermost part of the earth—the Carolinas, Mexico, Cuba, Java, Sumatra, and Borneo.

## Plantations

The most expensive tobacco in the cigar is the wrapper, or outside leaf. This can only be produced of a sufficiently thin and flexible quality in two favoured spots—the Deli plain in East Sumatra, and in Borneo, where the climate suits the particular species of tobacco-plant required.

A tobacco plantation in Borneo is a most interesting place to visit. A little world of its own, landward of the mangrove and seaward of the foothills, the sandy loam stretch at the top of a bay that forms the plantation is unique in its self-sufficiency. Its roads lead from one section to another, and down to the landing-place where the tobacco is shipped, and from whence the little steam-launch keeps up communication with the outside world. It has its own telephone system, sometimes its own railway, its own hospital, its own district magistrate, its own post, its own central club, and its own police-cell. The European staff, the "Tuans," as the coolies call them, are the aristocrats of this small world, not to say autocrats, and the manager, who is termed the "Tuan Besar" or big "Tuan," is the greatest autocrat of all ; his word is law, none dare gainsay it ; his power is unique, for he is ruling beyond the boundary of criticism. Borneo has no real newspaper, and the press of far-distant Singapore knows little or nothing of what is going on in the far-distant nooks and crannies of this great island. But the

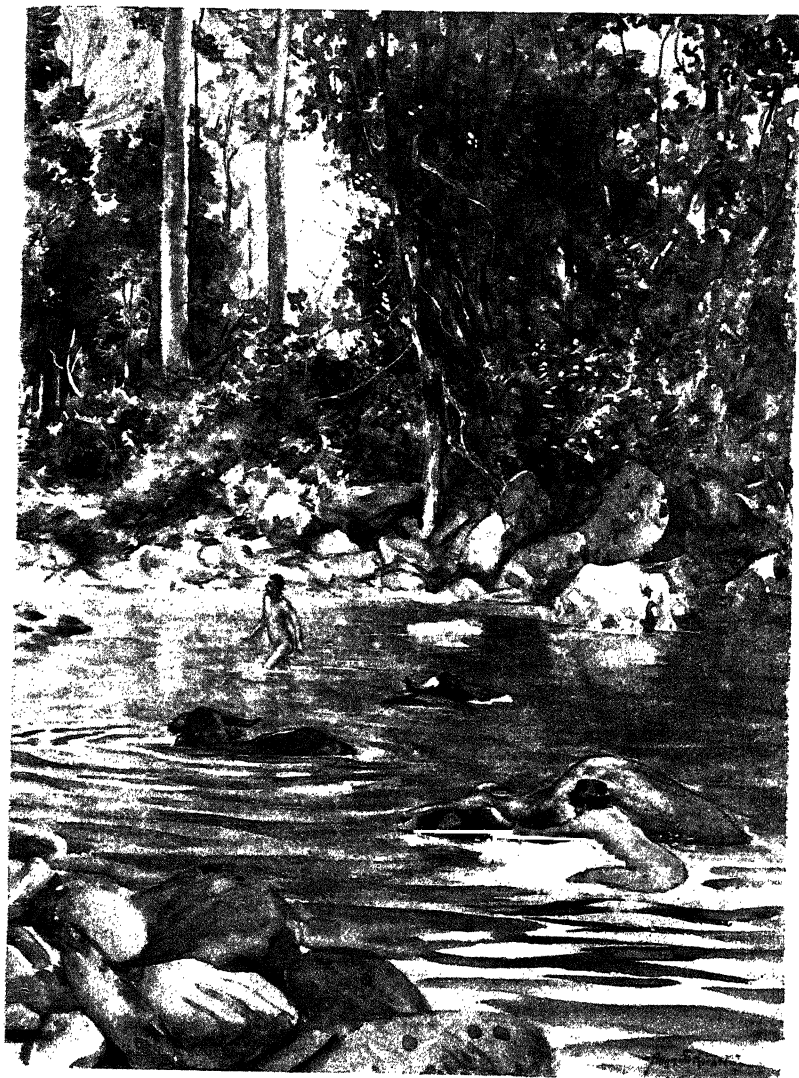
## British North Borneo

Borneo "Tuan Besar" is a just though strict controller of labour.

The labour is provided by Chinese and a certain percentage of Malay coolies. The Chinese are recruited in the opium and gambling dens of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Swatow, and are all enlisted for a year's service, after which they receive their commission on the crop and are free to depart. They rarely go ; the country suits them and the pay is high.

A great man among the Chinese on an estate is the Head "Tandil," or overseer. He is invariably a man who has risen from the ranks of the coolies, and won by his hard work and superior will-power the respect of his fellow-countrymen and the confidence of the Europeans. He generally, in the course of fifteen or twenty years accumulates wealth. He has several ponies and two or three traps, and drives about the plantation in grand style ; but it is very seldom that he leaves the place even for a short holiday—he must always be within call to act as interpreter, to hear complaints, and to put forward all the requests of the coolies.

The coolies are divided into two classes. The strong, robust, and capable men each have an acre and a half of land given to them ; they are advanced money for food, agricultural implements, and other requirements. At the end of the year their tobacco is bought



DUSUNS BATHING WITH THEIR  
BUFFALOES. *Page 38.*

## Plantations

from them and carted to the fermenting-shed, after it has been partially dried in large barns, and they start on entirely new work, which lasts during the four months of the rainy season. They work then in a gigantic shed, turning over piles of thousands of bundles of tobacco-leaf, and sorting it out into different qualities for the European market.

The scene inside one of these fermenting-sheds is very picturesque. The centre of the shed is occupied by a large platform, leaving only a narrow border all round for the coolies that sort the leaf. On this platform hundreds of coolie women, mostly hailing from Java, and men of various Malay tribes, together with Chinese basket-carriers, are hurrying to and fro, the coloured flowery-patterned "sarongs" of the women showing up gaudily with the brown piled-up leaf as a background. Over all floats the strong ammonia smell of the fermenting tobacco.

The second class into which the Chinese labourers are divided is that of the gang-men. These are all inferior men, either physically weak, or else of a low order of intelligence, or perhaps old field-coolies who have come down in the world through opium-smoking. They must be given work under the eyes of a European, also a Chinese foreman is put in charge of them.

The Malay coolies are mostly used for building



## British North Borneo

sheds, for watching stores, for cartmen, and for messengers.

The Malay has one great fault: if put on a monthly wage, he will borrow and spend the money long before it is due. He is persistently dogging the "Tuan's" footstep to ask for a dollar advance on his next pay.

On one plantation in Borneo was a coolie named Ahmed, an old hand who had worked up and down the coast for this or that company for many years. He had an old toothless wife, Samira, and when the one was not gambling at cards the other was, and both were persistent beggars and borrowers.

One day, about six in the morning, just after the "ton-ton" had called the coolies to work, Ahmed was found cringing at the steps of the bungalow of one of the Europeans, waiting to attract the notice of that gentleman when he came to drink his early morning cup of coffee.

Ahmed was wrapped up in his wife's tattered "sarong," which originally carried a glorious pattern of scarlet butterflies settling on blue and yellow flowers.

"Why, Ahmed!" said the planter, "why are you, a man, dressed in a woman's sarong?"

"Ah, Tuan!" replied the old coolie, "that is my shame. I was unlucky last night, and I lost all my wages and my clothes as well."

His clothes had never consisted of more than a pair

## Plantations

of old trousers, but his generous "Tuan" gave him fifty cents to redeem them and make himself a little less ridiculous.

The disgust of the "Tuan" was, however, intense when he discovered that the bungalows of all the other Europeans within walking distance had been visited by Ahmed, and a similar story had produced from each the begged for loan.

The great institution on the tobacco estates is the "ton-ton." This is a hollow log cut from the trunk of a jack-fruit or other similar tree. It is hollowed out with chisels from one slot-like opening that runs down it, commencing a foot below the top and ending a foot from the bottom. It is suspended from a roofed-in beam, so that it hangs down into a hole or well, one third of its length reaching below the level of the ground. When struck, people passing near would never be deafened by the noise, which, in fact, sounds surprisingly slight; but it travels far, and can be heard right away on the bounds of the plantation. At five-thirty in the morning the "ton-ton" calls the coolies to work, and at eleven bids them return for a midday rest. At one o'clock again it calls, and at six it sounds the close of the working day. Right through the night the watchmen have to strike each hour on the "ton-ton"—it is, in fact, the estate chronometer by which all the staff correct their watches,

## British North Borneo

If its voice is heard in sharply-repeated notes during the night, every man is alert. That is the sign of either a fire or a fight in the coolie lines, and it behoves every good planter to turn out, mount, and gallop to the scene of the trouble.

A fire at night in a drying-shed is a scene of great interest to anyone not financially concerned in the disaster.

These barns are built of palm-poles covered in with a roof, and walls of thatch called "attap," consisting of leaves of the nipa-palm fastened together. When dry they burn furiously, and as they are buildings 32 feet high at the ridge of the roof, and 350 feet long, the flames produced are enormous.

These sheds generally catch fire at one end, and directly a European arrives on the scene, he orders the Malay coolies to swarm over the roof and cut away a section of the thatch right across, so that the flames do not spread beyond. Chinese coolies similarly open up the two side-walls, and then the fire is cut off and confined, so long as the wind is low, to the end where it originally started. Meanwhile other coolies are carrying out the wooden frames on which the tobacco is suspended from under the burning roof.

Half-naked Chinamen and Malays, and Europeans clad in pyjamas, boots, and leggings, all covered with the same black, soot-like ash, are running to and fro

## Plantations

hacking at burning timbers, taking away salvaged tobacco, or shrieking out hoarse commands, as the case may be. A short distance away the startled ponies of the Europeans are with difficulty held by their syces.

Directly the fight with the fire is finished, the Head "Tandil" and the manager take a roll-call of the coolies to see if one is missing, for a coolie with a spite against his "Tandil" or his "Tuan" is very often the culprit who fires one of these sheds. Seldom do they catch fire accidentally.

The man who was done out of half his work, when the Chinese, turning republicans, cut off their pig-tails, is the estate barber. Previously he had to shave five or six hundred heads during a month, and comb out the pig-tails; now all that he does is to clip off the wiry black hair from the coolies' scalps every now and again, when it begins to get so long as to hang down over their eyes. The barber is to be seen going his rounds from one row of coolie-quarters to another, his razors, combs, and scissors done up in a red cloth and tucked under his arm. When the coolies are working in the fields the barber sets up his umbrella near some tree-stump, and conducts his operations in the open.

In a well-ironed white suit, looking quite professional, the Chinese dresser from the estate hospital will also be seen visiting all the coolies, with his medicine-carrier

## British North Borneo

walking behind carrying a basket full of lotions and bandages. Cuts, burns, and ulcers he is an adept at treating. To see him pull out two or three teeth with a pair of forceps made in the year '70 is a pleasure, for the estate surgeon trains his dressers well.

### CHAPTER VIII

#### TOBACCO ESTATES

A YOUNG Englishman who has thrown up the hard work of a London office and sought and obtained a billet with a tobacco-planting company arrives in Borneo with the idea that his days of hard work are finished. He never made a bigger mistake in his life.

He is often sent straight away to run a section of sixty or more fields. Not being able to speak a word of Malay, which in a mixed form is the current language on the estate, he is considered "fair game" by the coolies, who are as mischievous as schoolboys. Indeed, now he begins to sympathize with the nervous under-master whom he teased at school.

At 5.30 a.m. the "ton-ton" goes, and the manager whistles for his fine Australian gelding, and canters off as a matter of course to the section of the new assistant. So, although the young man may have been playing billiards in the club until midnight, a long morning

## Tobacco Estates

sleep is denied him, and he has to be "up and getting." "By jove!" he thinks, "this is worse than catching the early train, and I have not got an excuse of a break-down on the line if I oversleep." He swallows his cup of boiling Java coffee and just runs down his veranda steps as the manager dismounts from his hack.

They walk down a road bounded by high-standing coarse grass or thorny scrub. "This," says the manager, "was where we planted last year;" and now the new hand learns with surprise that the fields are only used once in every seven years, for tobacco is a very exhaustive crop for the land to bear.

A Chinese "Tandil" with hat in hand waits for them in front of the seed-beds, rows of which stretch out on either side of a central path, some roofed over with a low canopy of grassy stalks to keep off the scorching sun, others, their seedlings more fully developed, exposed to the weather.

A tobacco-planter never speaks of a caterpillar or a grub; everything that crawls is a "worm." Every year in July a plague of "worms" comes over the crop. Large holes are eaten in the leaves, and, if the plague is very severe, the tobacco, when hung up in the drying shed or barn, resembles old Brussels lace.

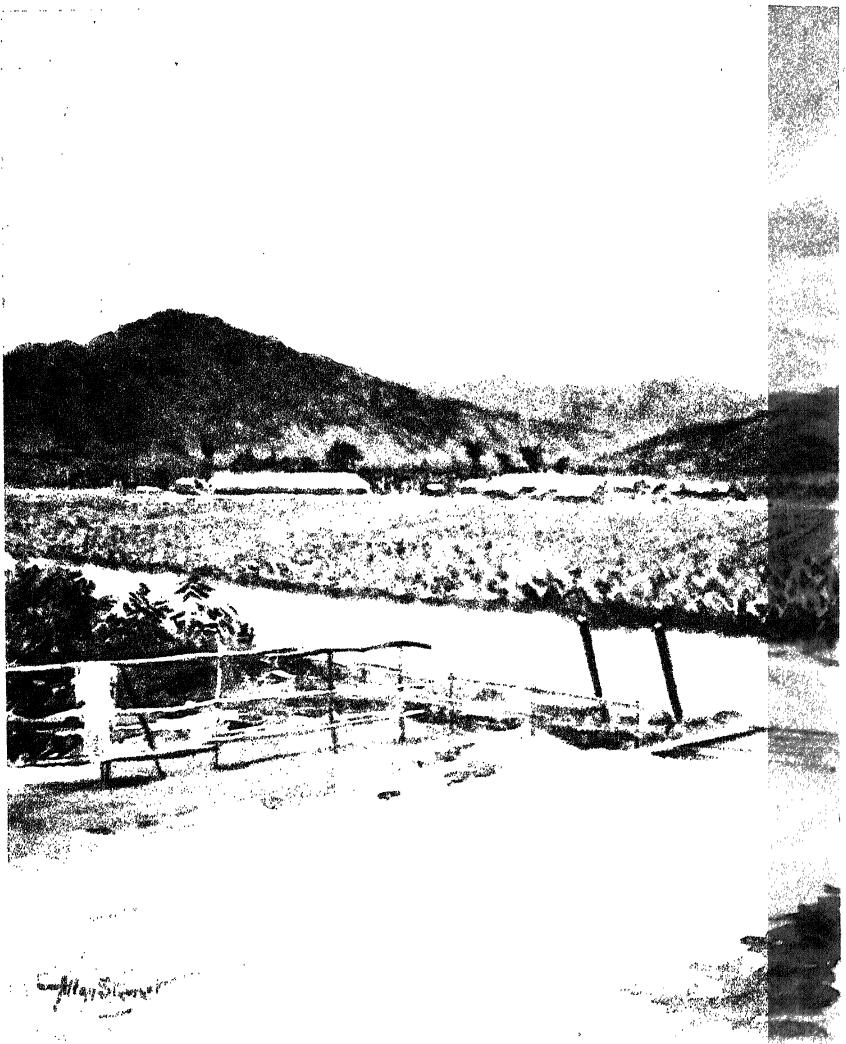
The manager now walks down one of the planting-paths. At right angles to the path, one and a half feet

## British North Borneo

apart, the baby trees are planted out in rows, each tree shaded by a flat splint of wood stuck in the ground and placed so as to shield it from the sun. Farther off slightly bigger trees have had the earth hoed up round their roots, and thus a small trench is made between the rows of trees to carry off the rain. Coolies walking between the rows are bending their backs over every tree in turn looking for "worms." Here the manager points out to the assistant that in two fields side by side, the one has much "broken leaf," as he calls it, and the other little, because the one coolie is an old hand that knows how to look for "worms," while the other, searching half of the day, can hardly find any. There is something to learn even in finding caterpillars.

In every direction over the fields run ditches and drains, carrying off the overflowing water from the tropical rains. In Borneo it often rains three inches in an hour. The paths are carried over these ditches by bridges made of two sticks, placed side by side. These are easily crossed by a coolie, but an inexperienced European has often had a nasty fall when attempting it.

Not used to taking much exercise so early in the morning, the new assistant is soon feeling as if he would like to sit down and have his breakfast, but the energetic manager goes on. Not until every corner of the section has had the scrutiny of his experienced eyes



A TOBACCO PLANTATION. Page 47.



## Tobacco Estates

does he turn back to the main road, and the assistant wearily drags his limp body back home. But see him eat his buttered eggs, and watch him try every strange dish of his new Eastern menu! On the tobacco estates everything comes in to make a change in diet—Chinese “mee,” Malay “nasi-goring,” German “blud-würst,” Dutch salted girkins, and a British steak and onions, all being served at breakfast, tiffin, and dinner indiscriminately.

Everybody else sleeps between the hours of eleven and one, but the new hand does not succeed in obtaining the refreshment of body and mind that other people get from the siesta. The sand-flies and mosquitoes worry him, and the splash-bath seems a poor apology for a bath : it does not cool him enough, and the trick of wearing a light silk Chinese jacket and a Malay “sarong” during these two hot hours is not yet known to him.

Poor new hand! To have to turn out into the broiling heat as tired as when the morning's toil was just finished is the limit for human endurance. He drags his weary footsteps once again round his section, and comes back at five o'clock, to find a smiling “Tandil” and forty-five ragged “kongsikans” waiting to be paid their day's wage. This will take an hour, for they all know he is a new hand, and they all try to claim a few cents more than they have earned ; but the

## British North Borneo

"Tandil," fearing the wrath of the manager, saves the "Tuan" from being too badly fleeced.

As he drops into a long chair and feebly calls his "boy" to bring a large glass and a cool drink, the young man confesses to himself that the work done in an average London office is trifling. After dinner his nearest neighbour comes galloping up for a chat, and incidentally mentions that between half-past five and seven he went out and dropped fifteen brace of pigeons; while Thompson, over there across the river, was certainly after deer, as his rifle was heard three times. The new man gasps, How can they do it? He hastens to ask his friend how he stands it.

"Well, you see," comes the reply, "I am acclimatized. The Borneo climate is the wonder of the tropics—hot days, but cold nights. It is the cold nights that pull us through, you know. Old Cadogan over on Bichit Estate has been out here twenty years, and he is still good for a hard day's work."

Yes, it is Borneo's cold night breezes that make her climate one of the best in the tropics for an Englishman.

# Towns

## CHAPTER IX

### TOWNS

THERE are few towns in Borneo. Banjermassin and Pontianak, in Dutch Borneo, are the two largest collections of houses. Then there is Balik Pappan, the town of the petroleum wells, also in Dutch Borneo, but near the British boundary. Sandakan and Kuching are important owing to being the administrative centres of large areas, but buildings—beyond Government offices, barracks, and the residences of Government officers—they have few to show. With their white plank bungalows and green palm-trees, tennis-lawns, and clean gravel walks, they are beautiful to visit and delightful to dwell in.

During the last few years the rubber-planters have opened up land for the cultivation of their beautiful tree on the banks of every river of importance in Borneo—in fact, the old tobacco-culture is taking quite a secondary place. As a result of this recent development many small Government posts are becoming the nucleus of townships.

On the West Coast Railway, in British North Borneo, many such townships exist. An optimistic Governor will almost venture to call them towns, but, as a matter of fact, they are just baby townships still in their

## British North Borneo

swaddling cloths, bound up with the red tape of Government regulations and under the autocratic rule of the local district officer. In a day to come, however, they will have their mayors and councils, their electric lamps and ice factories, their dust-carts and picture theatres ; but that will be the day when all the available land is planted with its millions of rubber-trees and the rubber is going down the line at the rate of a hundred freight trains a day.

In the panorama of one of these little railway towns there are always necessarily three prominent features. There are the everlasting mountains, always visible in Borneo, no matter where ; then there is the river, for a township must be near water ; and, lastly, there are the Chinese shops. A native of Borneo will live in no town, and in Borneo the population of a town is necessarily nearly all Chinese ; still, there may be a store-keeping Indian hadji, and there may be ten or a dozen Sikh police to add a dash of colour to the ranks of the citizens.

The miniature coast-ports are all of a type well known to readers of the South Sea stories of Miss Beatrice Grimshaw.

A Government house at the back on a hill, one street of houses and shops, a small jetty, and probably a church. Then there are sands tinged with white and red, denoting the presence of coral reefs, and innumer-

## Towns

able small sailing-craft at anchor, or tied up, or most probably beached. Over all hangs the smell of drying sea-slug, something awful at noon in its nauseating intensity. Once a month the small steamer calls, discharging thirty or forty tons of civilization packed in tins and bottles. It rarely discharges a saloon passenger, although the steerage passengers are always mysteriously coming and going.

When the ship has tied up alongside the little jetty, the harbour-master, who is also the Customs official, the head of the police, the district magistrate, the postmaster, and the coroner combined, steps on board, and the good-natured skipper greets him with a smile and a handshake as an old friend. During his thirty years on the same route the skipper has made hundreds of such old friends along the Borneo coast. Friendship wears well in Borneo.

The next morning the vessel sails, and then the encompassing jungle renews its siege of the little place for a month, and the jungle carries the war right into the enemy's camp, for, sad to relate, so often can be seen grass-ferns and even palm-seedlings sprouting in the main and only thoroughfare. The three tobacco and rubber estates across the bay get their imports from the little quayside, and they provide all the freight for the monthly boat. Should those estates close down, in a year, more or less, the jungle would have claimed its

## British North Borneo

own, and not even the wildest and most timid of deer would be able to detect in this spot aught that tokened the past or present habitat of man.

The meanings of the names of Borneo's towns are quite unique and almost fantastic. Kuching means a "cat," Banjermassin means the "salt flood," Pontianak means the "hobgoblin," Balik Pappan means the "turned plank," Sandakan means the "precious thing." All the "ideal queen" cities of a newly-opened Californian railway route cannot compete as regards names with these.

Whilst rounding Balhalla Island and making for the Customs House in a small native "prahu," an American Consul was once heard to say that Sandakan was the loveliest spot in the world. At sunset the scene is indeed pretty. The town is built straggling over a long frontage, roads have been cut up rocky inclines, and on the top of its own cliff each European bungalow gleams white among its own plumes of waving coconuts. Launches come steaming into the harbour, towing lighters full of logs for the saw mills.

The road along the sea-front is made from rock torn out of the face of the cliff. For a long distance this road runs between the base of the cliffs and a row of plank houses, built on high piles over the beach.

It must be funny to live with one's front-door opening on to a main street, and one's back-door

## Towns

opening on to the eternal ocean ; but so the inhabitants of this part of the town live. "Kismet," the eternal "Fate," will decide whether the typhoon rolls up and drowns them, or whether they will be merely left a little longer until the cliff rolls down and crushes them. They are all Mohammedans, so they are content to leave it to "Fate."

In Sandakan the half-naked little brown boys, and the half-dressed little yellow boys, play together on the sea-front in a fraternizing way, which is delightful to see. They sit side by side in the classroom of the mission-school, but when they attain the age of early youth they begin to find that a Chinaman was born for work and a Malay was born for play. Then Ah Tam discovers also that Abdul Johari lives only on rice and dried fish, and Abdul Johari discovers that Ah Tam enjoys the flesh of the unclean pig ; and the big barrier of race prejudice begins to insert itself between the chums. At the age of twenty the Malay has a tolerant contempt for the Chinaman, with whom he only continues on terms of acquaintanceship in order to borrow from him now and again a dollar or two at an exorbitant rate of interest.

In the British part of Borneo football is the game that attracts and interests not only the sport-loving Malay, but also the hard-working Chinese lad.

The Malay plays with bare feet, kicking the ball

## British North Borneo

with the sole of his foot just at the base of the toes, and wonderfully hard can he kick. The Chinese player generally purchases a pair of cheap football boots made in Hong Kong, and although altogether more clumsy than the agile Malay, the inherited stamina of his race makes him a determined "back," while he is more easily initiated into the finer art of combination.

In Sandakan and Kuching, in the smaller coast-ports, in fact everywhere where an enthusiastic British official has introduced the game, a couple of goal-posts will be seen, and throughout the day Malay boys will be merrily chasing the leather-skinned ball over the turf, while at night the Chinese will come down after a hard day's work and join heartily in the game.

In British Borneo, also, the annual pony races are a feature of each port. In some secluded corner of the environs of the town will be a patch of turf, most liberally scattered with thorny shrubs and weeds, with a roofed-in plank platform facing on to it. In the ordinary course of events this open space is used in drilling the "military forces," consisting of six or seven Sikhs, a Pathan, and four Dyaks. A funny marching line they form, too! A bandy-legged little Dyak rolling along between two loose-limbed, tall, bearded, Punjabis, his rifle appearing for a second or two to be on the point of overbalancing its bearer altogether.



## Towns

Just before the end of the rainy season a corporal and four or five prisoners from the gaol appear, and cut down the thorny shrubs at the rate of one and a half trees a day. After a month this very tiring work is finished. The Resident calls a meeting of the principal townsmen. Two Chinese shopkeepers and the Court Clerk respond to the call. They each subscribe five dollars, and together they form a committee. The committee collect a few hundred dollars and two or three silver cups from the nearest estates, the Resident supplies another cup, and pays all expenses not covered by the collection from the planters; then he issues invitations far and wide to attend the races.

It is marvellous how the people congregate. Of course, a date is chosen when an up-boat and a down-boat passing are both due. A small Customs boat from neighbouring American islands may put in, or a naval survey ship may send its contingent. The planters come along in their little steam-launches, and the port at last, from a white man's point of view, appears to be inhabited.

The roofed-in plank platform, decorated with red, white, and blue bunting and flags galore, renders its annual service as a grand-stand. Ladies from up the coast and ladies from down the coast grace it with their presence.

The Borneo pony is a little spiteful "cow-legged"

## British North Borneo

animal, but the plucky Malay jockies, most of them mere boys, make him go fast enough for the enthusiasts of the sport to call it racing.

Some of the jockies, for sure, are Badjaus from the Tempassuk Plain, who have been used to chasing deer on pony-back through scrub and coarse "lallang" grass. These will certainly do their best to make a race of it.

The pony-race is the white man's form of gambling. The Chinaman has another. In the street of the little coast-port is a shop bearing the sign or "chop" of the gambling farmer. Here are small tables covered with a mat that is divided into four sections. A dice under a square brass cup is shaken in the middle, the cup slowly removed, and the dice exposed. Three! Ah! Wong Long has won twenty-four cents, and the unfortunate Ching Poi has lost forty. Once or twice a year the farmer has a lottery. His lottery tickets are in batches, each batch named after an animal.

Some little "Amoy," as the Chinese child is termed in general, dreams about a huge hungry crocodile. He tells his father about it. The father sends him to the rich uncle who rents the opium licence, and is credited with having great wealth. The uncle gives the child fifty cents to put on "Mr. Crocodile" in the lottery. He himself, secretly, believing in the value of the child's dream, puts fifty dollars on it. The story

## Towns

gets round the town ; everyone is eager to buy the tickets with the figure of a crocodile on them. They are sold out.

The day of the raffle comes. "Mr. Crocodile's" is not the winning card ; instead "Mr. Iguano" turns up. "Ah !" says Amoy, "I was near the mark : I only mistook an iguano for a crocodile." He is quite happy about it. But his uncle and many another past friend-in-need have no more spare cents for little Amoy when he next dreams a dream.

Of Borneo's towns and town-life there is not much to tell, for the great wild island is typically the land of jungle, and head-hunters, and all those kind of romantic things, creatures, and men, that keep far, far away from towns and cities.

## CHAPTER X

### THE "ORANG-OUTANG"

UNDER this peculiar name the people of England know the giant ape of Borneo.

But it is only the people of England that call him by this name. His Malay name, by which all other Europeans call him, is "orang-utan." "Orang" means man, and "utan" means forest, hence his proper name is "forest-man," or, to use poetical licence, "wild man of the woods."

## British North Borneo

He is reputed to be the largest of apes, next to the African gorilla. On account of his repeated raids upon Dusun fruit-trees and maize-fields, a long feud has been carried on against him by the hill people.

The Dusun chief weapon for attacking him, the blow-pipe, is an instrument of sudden death, made out of so fragile a material as to appear but a toy. It consists of a tube of hard wood, four, five, and five and a half feet long. One end is shaped to fit the mouth, the other end has a sharp stabbing blade attached, like a bayonet to a gun. Inside the tube of hard wood is sometimes inserted another tube, made from a stick of softer wood. The darts are small and light, and carry a strong poison. It is known throughout Borneo by the native name of "sumpitan."

When the child or woman who is on the watch shouts out that a "kōgyu," which is the local name of the ape in the hill villages, is in the fruit-trees, then half a dozen men and boys seize their "sumpitan," and, creeping round the base of the tree, they fire volley after volley of small inch-long darts at the red hairy body of the ape. If he is on a low branch, he is soon overcome by the poison and falls. But if high up, it is probable that the one or two darts that reach him only sting him into a fury. He dashes to and fro, shaking the branches of the tree as violently as ever they were shaken by a gale. The fruit falls in all

## The "Orang-Outang"

directions. If it is "durian" or "tarap," the size and weight of which are considerable, the Dusuns stand clear, for even a Dusun skull is not proof against such a bombardment.

They do all they can to keep the ape from jumping to another tree; of course, only when the trees are far apart do they succeed. If he can swing from tree to tree, he often manages to travel in this way back to the jungle. In the dense jungle he travels among the tree-tops at a pace which defies any attempt at following. However, supposing that he is isolated in a high tree, with no chance of escape except along the ground, the Dusuns will, by pretending to run away, induce him to come lower and lower, until, when well within range, a volley of the fatal darts places him finally *hors-de-combat*.

The Dyaks, who still keep the skulls of their fathers' slain human foes, to show the prowess of the "kampong" in days gone by, are very fond of adulterating their heap of gruesome heirlooms with the skulls of big "orang-utans." So much has this been done, that in some of the Dyak "kampongs" the pile of trophies is composed only half of human heads. This is the one instance in which the ape can take the place of man to great advantage.

In tall trees, perched on the mighty shoulders of the jungle-clad mountains, the "orang-utan" builds

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## British North Borneo

his house. He breaks off branches and weaves them into a leafy bower, where, swayed by the wind, he can sleep far away from the sting of the sand-fly that torments him in the valley. From here he sends forth his challenge, a weird guttural call—"Kō-gyu, Kō-gyu." It is after this call of his that the Dusuns have named him. When the leaves of his bower have dried and become crisp, he forsakes it and makes another in the next tree. Sometimes a clump of trees will contain eight or nine of these forsaken homes, and the one that is not yet abandoned will be difficult to locate from the ground below. From this habit of the "orang-utan" has come the yarn that away in his own mountains he builds villages, and lives in what, for an ape, is an advanced state of natural evolution. But the student of Darwin who has accepted this story must be disappointed. A whole village is occupied only by one old grandfather ape, or a mother and her little clinging "progeny."

The Dusuns credit the "orang-utan" with devilish malignity, but as a matter of fact the poor creature is a great deal more frightened of them than they are of him. The Dusuns often capture young ones, and tie them up with a piece of rattan-cane, on which they have threaded joints of hard bamboo to prevent their biting through it. These youngsters soon become tame.

The "orang-utan's" food, besides fruits, is very

## The "Orang-Outang"

varied. He must in the course of a year destroy hundreds of birds'-nests, as he is a glutton with eggs. He also devours the crown of the young forest palms, all kinds of young shoots, and, above all, the wild banana, stem and flower.

There are two species of "orang-utan" in Borneo, the one reaching to a very large size indeed, the other, although exactly alike in other respects, never exceeding forty to forty-five pounds in weight.

When kept as domestic pets by Europeans they become very affectionate, and, unless teased, can be trusted in every way. Of course, they cannot be let loose, as, like all apes, they pull every bright or pretty thing to pieces to see of what it is made.

Many "orang-utans" in captivity die quickly. Down near the ground and in the plain they soon sicken. Although coming from a tropical land, they cannot stand intense heat. Their habitat being among the forest giants on the hills naturally makes them feel the intenser heat of the valleys and plains, and their usual sleeping-place being above the mosquito zone, for them to sleep with swarms of these buzzing, biting insects round them is torture. If an "orang-utan" be found chained to a post below a European's house, then at night, out of charity, give him an old sack to get into—not to keep him warm, but to keep the mosquitoes off him. No "orang-utan" can be fed on

## British North Borneo

cake containing animal fat other than butter, as it is for him a poison ; but he will be thankful for copious draughts of cow's milk, for eggs, and for fruit. He also likes boiled rice well salted.

Given a handy post up which to climb, and a horizontal scantling from which to swing, the "orang-utan" will reign supreme over all the other domestic pets. The dogs will soon learn a lesson they will never forget if they set on to him. He will swing from his perch, catch a dog by a hind-leg, lift him far off the ground, and gash a fearful wound in the poor brute's thigh before hurling him down again.

A female "orang-utan" in the possession of a rubber-planter was very fond of stealing the young puppies of a bull-terrier bitch. At first the puppies yelped, and the bull-terrier was furious with rage and anxiety. But the ape, high up on her post, serenely went on hugging and nursing the two puppies she had stolen, regardless of the tumult she was creating. The puppies, when a month old, no longer objected to their volunteer nurse, and the old mother terrier forgot and forgave her original anxiety, and allowed the ape to nurse the pups, even on the ground, unmolested.

The head of an "orang-utan" is nearly bald, two tufts of red coarse hair only generally growing right at the back of the top of the skull. His face, when his cheeks are not filled with food, is wreathed with





A SULU HOUSE AND COCOANUT  
PLANTATION.

## The "Orang-Outang"

wrinkles, thus giving him altogether a very old, care-worn expression. In captivity he is generally given, by the Chinese "boys" and other servants of the house, the nickname "botak," or, to put it in vulgar English, "old bald-head."

In the mountains there exists a large red monkey, not an ape, but a creature with a glorious tail. His fur is long and of a light brick-red colour. He is very rare, but has been seen by Europeans on two or three occasions. When a specimen has been shot and put before naturalists, it will probably be proved that this is the largest monkey in the world.

Borneo is a great land for rare and curious monkeys and apes.

In the estuaries of some of the rivers are tribes of long-nosed monkeys. They live on the bean-like seed of the mangrove, and are dwellers among swamps. Extremely timid and shy, this animal is only obtainable by approaching it with caution in a boat. The young will not live in captivity. His fur is thick and glossy, quite unique among monkey-garb for its beauty, and in size he is little inferior to the smaller "orang-utan."

The celebrated Gibon ape is very common in Borneo, where it is called the "wawa." Its cry of "ōōp-ōōp-ōp ppp" can be heard soon after day-break ringing out loudly through the jungle thickets.

## British North Borneo

Its face is black and shiny, encircled by a fringe of short hair. It makes a gentle pet, but a dangerous one for strangers to handle.

The fierce "kraah" monkey is very similar in appearance to the small travelling companion of an Italian organ-grinder, but larger. These are nasty brutes. When young they would bite their owner, if they could only pluck up courage to do it; and when old and still in captivity they do bite everybody they can get near, and are best shot and buried, for even the strongest chain may snap. One of these, a brute about six years old, once got loose and ran "amok" through a bungalow. He caught the "boy" by the arm and tore his hand into ribbons. By the time he was finally shot the amount of damage he had done was considerable.

## CHAPTER XI

### TIMBADO AND DEER

Down in the glades where the brooks dash over their rocky courses, and where sweet grasses grow on the native's disused rice-fields, the herd of "timbado" will be found. The old male alone is standing and flapping his tail to keep off the flies that "buzz" around; the cows and their young are lying half-concealed in the tufts of grass.

## Timbado and Deer

Although smaller than the "sladang" of the Malay Peninsula and some other breeds of bison, yet the "timbado" is a mighty fellow in his way, being larger than a Herefordshire bull. The great characteristic about him that impresses the sportsman most is his square appearance. A huge square chest, a square head, no curves or rounded surfaces except his small insignificant horns. For the size of the brute the latter are terribly disappointing; they rarely exceed 24 inches in length. His colour varies slightly, but is darker than that of his relatives in Regent's Park, and in old animals becomes a dark chrome flecked with white.

A terribly shy animal is this "timbado," and the difficulty for the sportsman to get within range of him is great. When worked into a fury by the worrying of two or three dogs, however, he no longer heeds the presence of man, but with head down and nostrils dilated he seeks to impale his canine tormentors on his black glossy horns.

Hence it is that many planters and other Englishmen in Borneo keep a pack of mongrel dogs, with a lot of the native pariah blood in them to make them keen in the jungle, especially for shooting "timbado." They also keep a Malay tracker, or, to use the common world-wide term, "shikari."

At four o'clock in the morning the "shikari," with

## British North Borneo

two or three of his younger brothers, will wait outside the "Tuan's" bungalow, and directly they have aroused the heavy-sleeping Chinese boys, they get the latter to catch the dogs that are going to be used and to put them on a leash made of cane. The best of these cane leashes will not entangle or catch, however thorny and overgrown the route may be.

The boys arouse the "Tuan," and on a cup of hot cocoa and two or three raw eggs he makes a hasty, but sustaining, meal. Dressed in a suit of green Indian "kananoor," which matches the foliage and grasses through which he will have to track his wideawake quarry, with a double "terai" hat and puttees, the sportsman looks like a modern Robin Hood about to poach the King's deer. The "shikari" is in front with the gun, the "Tuan" next, and then the young lads with the two selected dogs, and so they steal along the overarched bed of some watercourse leading into the heart of the jungle. After walking for perhaps an hour, the "shikari" begins to get very cautious. If the "Tuan" steps upon a twig he will turn round and look at him almost sorrowfully; if one of the youngsters treads on the toe of the dog he is leading and the dog yelps, the "shikari" turns with an evil glint in his eye, and gives the culprit a look that seems to convey that old, old phrase, "Only wait 'til I get you home!" Presently the "shikari" pauses, carefully examining an almost in-

## Timbado and Deer

visible impression on the carpet of leaves that covers the ground. He barely whispers as his mouth forms the word "bēkas!"—footmark! Everyone gets excited. The dogs are only with great difficulty prevented from whining, so intense is their desire to be let go. The "Tuan" crawls up to also examine the impression. He signals, and the dogs are released. They rush ahead, and in a few seconds their "yap, yap, yap," tells their human companions that they have come up with the bison. No longer necessary now is it to worry much about snapping twigs, as all the beast's attention is concentrated upon his canine foes. The European dashes forward, seizes the gun, and is soon crashing through thorny shrubs and spiky clumps of bamboo in a way that bids fair to tear his suit to ribbons. In fact, it often does more than this—it tears the skin to ribbons also.

A glimpse is caught of the tossing head and torn and bleeding ears of the "timbado." Up goes the rifle without a pause. Bang! It looks like a clean miss, but when the gun is re-loaded, they push on to find blood-marks on the track. Soon the dogs hold the animal again. The gun gets another chance, and this time a well-aimed heart-shot drops the big animal dead. The "shikari" measures the horns, and protests that they are some of the finest he has yet seen; but his "Tuan," having heard this tale before, confines himself

## British North Borneo

to the less enthusiastic remarks that he is an "old male," "no youngster this time," etc.

One peculiarity of this species of bison is that the female has no real horns at all. She has only two queer little bumps projecting about six inches or more from the head.

Deer-shooting is also a great sport for the Borneo planter, but, owing to the dense crackling scrub or thorny jungle in which the deer hide by day, only "snap" shooting can be obtained. That is to say, the animal is come upon suddenly near at hand just as he is rising to flee, and the gun must be raised, aimed, and fired, all in a fraction of a second.

The deer-drive is quite another mode of killing deer. Sometimes Europeans join in with guns, but generally it is Badjaus or Dusuns alone that "jaring," as the natives term it. The system they follow is this: They make two or three hundred slip-knots from rattan-cane, then the loose ends of these slip-knots they weave into one common cord, or rope, of great strength. This is hung between two young trees that are situated far enough apart for the purpose, and, if the ground is fairly open, the rope is concealed with fern leaves, branches, etc.; the running nooses hang down, and are always more or less hidden in the grass.

In front of this net-like contrivance a clearing of thirty feet is cut, and the best spearmen wait here

## Timbado and Deer

beneath some ant-hill or tree-stump. The dogs, the boys, and the rest of the men start about 600 yards away from the clearing to drive the deer towards it and the net. They work forward in an extended line, beating the shrubs and saplings with the spears they all carry, while the dogs keep up a continuous "yap." The ends of this line begin to get in advance until the beaters are beating in a semicircle.

When the man on the extreme right reaches the clearing, he waits for the man on the extreme left to appear, and they guard the ends of the rattan-net while their centre of attack closes in, thus compelling the deer enclosed to cross the clearing, and either leap the net or get entangled in it.

Meanwhile many stray does, frightened by the noise and harassed by the younger dogs, break through and rush into the hidden danger. The spearmen, with wonderful quickness of aim, fling their spears at them. So strong are these little brown natives that sometimes a spear will go right through a deer, so that the tip of the blade appears on the other side. They then rush on the wounded animal and give it the "hallal," or throat-cut, as enforced by the Koran in order to enable good Mohammedans to eat the flesh. Dusuns, of course, do not worry over this last detail.

When the centre part of the beating-line begins to



## British North Borneo

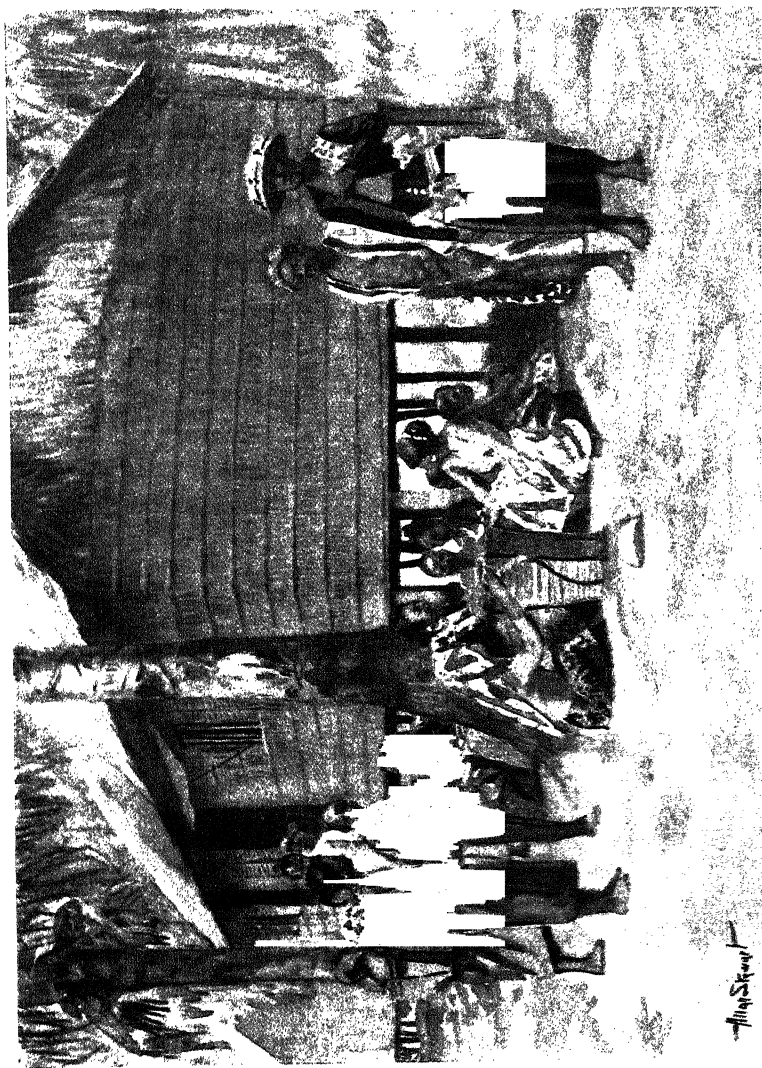
approach quite near, the old stag can be expected. Often, however, a clever old beast will break back through the line of beaters and escape, while another will jump half the clearing and the net at the same time.

The Borneo deer is a weighty specimen of his kind, but his horns, although thick and heavy, are very short, and never have that same elegance that the antlers of other deer have.

On the Sugut, Labuk, Kinabatangan, and other East Coast rivers, are found large herds of elephants and numerous rhino. The export of rhino horn to the Chinese market has long been a profitable branch of Borneo's trade. The Chinese use it as an ingredient in several family medicines, their ideas with regard to drugs being very different from our own.

The elephant of Borneo is the smallest of the dark-skinned species of Asiatic elephant. All the same for that he looms up large and awesome in the sight of some timid night-wanderer, who sees him standing in the moonlight across a jungle path. The Borneo rhino is also a small animal to bear that name, but his presence among the fauna of any land is enough to add a lot to the fame of the country in the eyes of sportsmen.

A certain Malay, who owned a name common enough in Mohammedan countries, Ishmail or 'Mail, migrated



Alfred Stieglitz

A NATIVE HOUSE.

## Timbado and Deer

fifty years ago from the State of Kelantan into Borneo. He had been trained from his boyhood's days to hunt the elephant with a poisoned spear, the Kelantanese being the most famous elephant hunters of all Malays. He settled down on an East Coast river, and married a native of Borneo, or rather two or three, for Islam allows its faithful to be polygamists. He had several sons, but the favourite of all was Bakar, the eldest, who, following the instructions of his father, became an expert elephant killer.

Bakar was sitting one day at dusk in the top of a small pădăhăn-tree, waiting for the elephants to pass beneath on their way to the stream where they nightly bathed. He had been there five nights in vain, the elephants having chosen another route. Suddenly a crashing in the jungle and the trumpeting of a male notified the approach of a herd. Bakar lifted his spear with both hands, and as the leading male passed underneath he thrust downwards with such force that the heavily weighted spear overbalanced him, and he found himself prostrated on the broad back of a raging vicious elephant. He lost consciousness, and of where he was carried he knew nothing.

Some time later the hill tribes living in the vicinity of the head-waters of the Kinabatangan River brought down to the nearest Malay village a thin, emaciated human being with wild insane eyes, who they declared

## British North Borneo

had wandered down from the interior mountains and begged for food at their "kampong."

This was Bakar. He had recovered consciousness to find himself hanging in the wrist-straps of his spear on the body of a dead elephant. But the broad stream on whose banks he first encountered the herd had disappeared, and he found instead a small hill stream gurgling beside him. The shaft of the spear, protruding from the elephant's body, was shattered by knocking against overhanging branches, but it had sheltered the body of the unconscious man from many a blow.

He had travelled on the back of an agonized elephant over three ranges of mountains!

Bakar was the last elephant hunter in Borneo to use the heavy poisoned spear. He may probably be still alive, but it is doubtful whether he ever goes after elephants now. The European with his rifle is the only possible foe that the Borneo species can encounter.

The small "plandok," about the size of a hare, and the "kijang," about the size of a whippet, are peculiar members of the deer tribe. The "plandok" has no horns, only two tusks curving from the upper jaw downwards and backwards; while the "kijang" has tusks and horns. The weird ghostly shriek of the "kijang" is like the cry of no other animal. The

## Timbado and Deer

early pioneers who first penetrated the jungle of Malaya must have been awe-struck by that blood-curdling sound. Moreover, the "kijang" always starts calling at dusk.

With big fierce "tuskers," or, to give them their traditional name, wild boars, the lands surrounding settlements and plantations abound. The Chinese market gardener often has to face the complete destruction of his small patch of tapioca, and is very careful to see that his fence is kept in proper repair.

## CHAPTER XII

### BIRDS'-NESTS AND FLYING FOXES

IN the rich man's house in China the most costly dish that the host can set before the guest is bird's-nest soup. The birds'-nests from which this luxury is made are imported into China from Borneo.

Lofty caves with floors of guano, the deposit during centuries of myriads of bats and thousands of birds, are the source from whence comes the supply of edible birds'-nests. The comparatively small opening by which the nest-collectors enter and leave the cave is generally situated in some hill valley. The birds, however, have probably several other entrances, high

## British North Borneo

up near the roof of the cave, although, of course, the caves vary in this respect.

To enter one of these storehouses of Nature is an experience which few white people have encountered. Out of the brilliant tropical sunshine into absolute black night the visitor steps, and a chilly feeling at once creeps down his spine. A rumbling whisper circulates around. It is the noise of the wings of thousands of bats. The atmosphere is damp; dirty water trickles off the roof, and forms pools into which one splashes and stumbles, anything but happily, for there is a constant feeling as if scores of leeches, snakes, and other creepy creatures were offensively alert.

The native guide, the descendent of generations of men who have with others taken part in the labour of collecting the nests, holds a spluttering resin torch on high, and huge black shadows cast by the wings of the bats chase themselves across the vault.

A stout bamboo is stuck in the floor, a nimble lad climbs up it, and ties another on to its extremity, so that the pointed top enters a cleft or cranny in the roof of the cave. He then mounts the second bamboo, and pulls off from the roof a couple of nests. They are of the white variety, very costly in China; but here they look like a collection of dead leaves and feathers stuck together with light-coloured shellac. The commoner black variety are even less attractive.

## Birds'-Nests and Flying Foxes

The nests are collected at fixed periods by the families claiming hereditary proprietorship in the caves. In some parts of Borneo, through the original owners having become connected with native risings, the caves have been confiscated and rented by the Government to Chinamen.

At the back of one of the most famous of these caves is a subterranean stream and pool, the latter the abode of blind fish. These fish are a species of cat-fish, but very small; the head possesses six or so tentacles, or rather, as the natives say, "whiskers," but is absolutely without eyes. Although it would be easy to catch them, they are considered to be possessed of malignant magical powers, and are left unmolested.

The "karlong," or flying-fox, is a well-known Borneo marvel. As a matter of fact it is nothing more than a huge bat, but what a bat! Across the wings it will measure five feet eight inches, while its fox-like head ends in a hard bone muzzle, operated by powerful jaws, and armed with quite formidable teeth.

At certain seasons of the year these creatures fly in battalions from the mangrove swamps of the coast to the fruit-bearing area of the foothills every night. They have been proved to cover a distance along a telephone route of sixty-four miles in two hours, their steady hawk-like flight being of quite a different character to the flight of most bats. Some of the big

## British North Borneo

males fly very low down, and can easily be brought to the ground with a charge of buck-shot. They are seldom killed outright, however, and in a wounded condition are nasty brutes to handle. One of them, some years back, when being picked up by a planter, whose friend had just shot it, wound its wings round his arm and tore pieces of flesh off without the planter being able to shake his arm free. Dogs even have been badly bitten through wounded bats suddenly clinging on below them when they went to retrieve those brought down by a gun.

A Sulu considers these brutes the angels of Satan, the souls of the wicked departed. To get a flight of them over a newly sown "sawah" rice-field is an evil omen for the crop, and superstition blames the "karlong" for trouble of every kind.

Besides the "karlong," there are many other weird creatures that come abroad at dusk. The mosquito-hawk, a small owl who can turn his head round twice without dislocating his neck, commences to "tok-tok-tok" about seven o'clock. If one is seen sitting on a post, his eyes will certainly be turned towards the approaching human being. If, then, the latter walks round the bird, the two phosphorescent points of its eyes will follow him all the time. Yet once more the circuit can be done, and still the bird's eyes revolve steadily round; but then the resiliency of its neck is



## Birds'-Nests and Flying Foxes

exhausted, and in order to focus its sight on this inquisitive person again it has, so to say, to "unscrew" its neck first. It does this while taking a short flight to the next nearest post.

The "tokit," a beautiful little spotted house lizard, makes a noise just like the mosquito-hawk. He is a plucky little fellow. Should he be discovered with his wife promenading on one of the bungalow's roof-scantlings, and any attempt should be made to capture them, he will rush at the person attempting this with jaws wide open, uttering fierce "tokits." However, his small mouth was only made for swallowing moths and beetles, so that he has no weapon to support his brave attack.

Cobras abound in Borneo, also the hamadryad, or "snake-eater," is found. The latter, perhaps, can hardly be said to abound, but one or two have been seen, denoting that many more exist in the leafy recesses of the jungle. The hamadryad is the most poisonous of all snakes, and is the largest of the hooded snakes. Its food is other snakes, and it can swallow anything in this line up to six feet, although itself not exceeding six feet nine inches or seven feet in length.

Early in the morning the cobras affected by the chilly night crawl on to a main path, where they can get the warming influence of the early morning sun. Many a time a native gets up early to go down to

## British North Borneo

the river and bathe, and later his poor swollen body is found beside the path, black through the virulence of the cobra's poison. He trod on one that was sunning itself on the path.

A wasp, called by the natives the "reminder," two kinds of centipedes, and four species of scorpions, the fire-ant, and the minute "tungo," all help to complete Nature's happy family circle in Borneo.

The "tungo" is a microscopic creature like a minute scarlet spider, that bores a hole into any naked foot that it can reach and deposits there its eggs. Within four hours the eggs hatch, and chronic itching follows. People "running the gauntlet" of the jungle, if not stung by fire-ants, wasps, centipedes, or scorpions, nor visited by the sociable "tungo," will certainly not escape the tree-leeches, which, although only as thick as a piece of horse-hair when in normal condition, are still a much-dreaded pest. They bite through socks, they wriggle up sleeves and under jackets—indeed, it is impossible to make the body impregnable to them.

The beautiful butterflies and moths of Borneo are beyond any brief description. For orchids it is the most famous country in the world, and, indeed, in this magic island beauty is rampant everywhere.